Where Life Is Real

Helen Hale

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The True Inspiration.

(See page 89.)

Where Life Is Real

By

HELEN HALE

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To

My Father,

Dr. James A. Adams

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THE END OF THE PLAY

The streets were dark and deserted, save now and then a belated pedestrian hurrying homeward. At a window in a two-story house that stood a little back from the street, a house with the quaint architecture of the long-ago stamped upon it, a woman sat. The house had grown old with the years, the woman with the hours. Peering through the heavy lace curtains, sole relics of a past prosperity, she gazed out upon the small lawn that lay white and motionless in the arms of the last snowfall, and down the street, small artery of a city's throbbing, pulsing life, that now seemed hushed and quiet. Footsteps, some lagging as if their owners were in realms of fancy far away, footsteps that spoke of pleasant antici-

pations and glad surprises, footsteps that seemed hollow and ghostly as though they mocked their owners' weariness, came up through the night and sounded their way in at the windows which, in spite of their heavy plate, rattled a weird welcome. The hours drifted slowly by, flotsam and jetsam of the passing year. A yellow moon leered mockingly from behind a cloud, which hung like a dark purple pillar in the eastern sky. Still the woman sat there. A sickly gas ray, that fled glad to escape from a near-by street lamp which stood a lonely sentinel of the night, stealing in at the window, discovered two diamonds glistening on the woman's cheek—diamonds that had fallen from feverish eyes, mute testimony to an agonized soul. The woman started, then sprang up as a squeaking cab rattling by stopped just beyond the house. With an impatient ejaculation the driver started the horse forward, turned him around and then stopped in front of the house. A large man backed

slowly out, then staggered up the walk with a long gray something in his arms. Two eyes, with the look of a hunted animal, and a pair of beseeching arms met him at the door. The gray blanket slipped to one side as he stumbled across the threshold, a white face fell forward, then nestled back again upon the broad shoulders. It was a girlish face framed in a wreath of yellow curls, with eyes of blue that now stared upward so vacantly, and a full tender mouth that spoke of kisses and tears. The face bore just the faintest suggestion of a smile, as though its owner had met death gently, bowed, and then passed on to a better something or somewhere. The woman, with a low, half-stifled moan, dropped limp and motionless in the hallway. The man crossed the unlighted parlor, sank slowly upon a divan with his burden, then dropped upon his knees beside it with clenched hands.

Hattie was an only child, sixteen, full of life and action. Contrary to orders from a

watchful mother to stay at home, she had slipped away unseen to the near-by home of a girl friend who had a birthday and a dollar. What fun it would be to spend the afternoon among the glittering sights of stage-land! The gay fairies in tinsel and gold, the clown elephant, the funny comedians, the lovely music—what attractions! So, laughing and with joyful anticipation, they had skipped merrily townward to the large new theater with wide doors and huge stone columns, that proclaimed itself one of the finest in all the land, and beckoned invitingly to gay crowds of women and children, who streamed across its corridors, filled with the glad cheer and merriment of the holiday season. Here came a party of Englewood high-school girls, all members of a little sorority, their eyes sparkling with healthy excitement; here came a trio of dainty misses from Kenwood, proud debutantes, full of girlish small talk, and elated with the fruits and victories of a first social season. Now come a

father and mother from Evanston, with their two children. The children had begged and teased, so the father had left his business for the afternoon to give them a little outing. Hattie and her young friend filed in with the rest, and up the stairway that led to the gallery.

In two hours the high-school girls were chilled in a last sleep, the gay young voices from Kenwood had ceased forever, and a whole family from Evanston had been blotted out. In answer to an anxious telephone call Hattie's father had gone to the theater. Regardless of policemen struggling to keep back the rapidly increasing crowds, he had fought his way in and up the marble stairway. The dead and dying were piled on all sides. Groans and moans burdened the air. He dashed down the stairs, enlisted the services of a young man with a lantern, and returned in an instant. A burly fireman brushed roughly by him carrying a young girl; it was Hattie's little friend. He pushed his way onward and upward, and at last

reached a top corridor, and there, sleeping peacefully at the base of a large marble column, he found his child. Hattie's life had gone out along with the life of the old year in the awful fire that swept over the Iroquois Theater, leaving in its wake the wreckage of broken hearts and broken homes.

THE FULFILLMENT

A GOOD many years ago, when Chicago was but a small city, there lived on what was then the outskirts of the town an old couple who had been trying all their lives to own a home of their own. Money was not any easier to earn and save in those days than it is now, probably a little harder; but after years of patient toil, many sacrifices, and never-failing hope, the dream of their life seemed about to be realized. The eve of the day came when the last payment upon the little home was to be made and the mortgage cleared off. The money which had been so hard to get together was in hand. The hearts of the old man and his wife beat high with joy and anticipation over the pleasure and satisfaction the morrow

was to bring them. But, alas! on awakening the next morning they found that a terrific blizzard was raging. All around their home and far down the road were great drifts of snow, which seemed like huge white enemies imprisoning them in the house. Any attempt to drive to the city with the money was out of the question. Transportation was very different then from what it is now. The old couple were forced to abandon their plan and content themselves with the hope that the following day would be more favorable for their trip.

At four o'clock of that morning they were aroused from their slumbers by officers loudly knocking at the door, who, upon entering, foreclosed the mortgage upon the home by order of the man who held it. The tears, prayers, and entreaties of the poor old couple were of no avail, and there was at that time no provision for redeeming property within a year. Consequently they lost their home and all the

money they had paid on it, and suffered many privations and hardships.

Some years after this sad occurrence, a tragedy occurred on a West Side street of the city. A prominent business man, a millionaire, on a bitter cold night was awakened from his sleep by the unwelcome footsteps of a thief in his home. Creeping down stairs he followed the man into the parlor and attempted to capture or kill him. The thief immediately fired and the man fell dead.

The crime was one of the most mysterious that ever occurred in Chicago. The murderer was never captured, the police have long since acknowledged their inability to do so, and the hush of years is falling over the tragedy.

The man slain on that cold night was the man who foreclosed the mortgage. And then followed a series of troubles among his children. A daughter was divorced, and then involved in an affair which took her out of the country. Another daughter was divorced again

and again. There were lawsuits between different members of the family. In one of these cases the most astonishing revelations were made in court regarding the troubles of the home. The wealth accumulated through the years seemed to be a very curse.

Long ago prophets lifted up their voices against the oppression of the poor and the weak. The world tries to relegate their warnings to the past; but in vain do men say, "Peace, peace, when there is no peace." Men and women still reap what they sow.

THE ILLUMINATED HOUR

INTO every life there comes at one time or another an illuminated hour. At such a time there is revealed to the soul, with sudden phosphorescent light, the purpose and the path, as it were, of their life. Happy are those who realize the wonderful meaning of this illumination, and follow it as did the Wise Men the Star of Bethlehem.

SHE was a happy, young Southern girl, absorbed in the tender and beautiful preparations for the marriage to the man she had loved all her life. Just when only a few more sweet little things remained to be done, the sudden, awful news was brought to her that her lover had been killed. She did not die, neither did

she lose her mind, because she was healthy, strong, and well poised. She simply lived, or, as she told me, existed, day after day, wondering what was going to become of her. The opportunity finally came to her to take a school in a far-away Texas town, and realizing that she must do something to arouse herself from the numbness of her great sorrow, she accepted it. That was the first little gleam of light.

The town in which she was teaching was dull, uninteresting, half asleep, with nothing about it to stimulate the imagination. There were, however, three children in her school who held a remarkable fascination for her. Unconsciously she began to weave little fancies and stories about them, and one eventful day they were sent North in the tangible form of a manuscript. When the brief notice of their acceptance came, there suddenly flashed through the deep shadows which had surrounded her for so many months a clear, bright light, which seemed to say to her, "Aspire, for the marble

waiteth." It was her illuminated hour. She did aspire and work, then waited. To-day, although still a young woman, she is one of our successful modern writers. Editors and publishers clamor eagerly for stories, and yet more stories, from her skillful, versatile pen.

When he was fourteen he was tossed out in the world to make his own way. He was first errand boy, and then stenographer in a lawyer's office. Finally getting tired of being ignorant, he began to read. Night after night, and at all spare times, he pored over the books and papers which came within his reach. It was his intention to be a lawyer, but one day the notice of a prize-story contest fell upon his observation, and needing a new overcoat, he decided to try his luck and enter the contest. The honor of winning the prize was his, also the satisfactory warmth of a new coat; but standing out above everything else was the shining direction to follow a literary life instead

of a career at law. He is now one of our most popular and promising young novelists. With the proceeds of his latest work he has built for himself a beautiful new house—one of the finest in the Hoosier capital.

THE years of her youth were far behind her. The once bright color in her cheeks had faded away, as had the roseate ambitions of happier days, while the golden gleams of her hair were changed to silver threads. The to-morrows of her life had become the yester-days. One after another her loved ones had been taken from her, until at last only one child remained, and upon this daughter she lavished all the left-over affection the others would have received had they lived. The little, irritating complaints and stabs, which so often come to the unselfish mother-heart when it is obliged to deny a beautiful young daughter certain little pleasures and fineries, had never been hers. A good-sized bank account had been

the real silver lining to the clouds of her bereaved life.

But one day it all disappeared. Some one had been dishonest and nothing remained but "the might have beens." The beloved daughter was in her third year at college, so valuable treasures and cherished gems were sacrificed to give her the opportunity of finishing her education. At last came a letter in a pretty girlish hand, saying, as do many letters to mothers, "Mamma, I need a new suit. My old one is so worn and shabby I can't wear it any longer."

Then the mother had one of those sinking, empty hours which all of us have known. What could she do? she wondered. She had hoped and prayed something would happen to help them along, but nothing had happened. With a fixed, determined expression she went down to the office of a big and powerful newspaper and had an interview with the managing editor. What she said to him or his reply I do not

know, except that she was given a most delicate and difficult assignment. When she succeeded, she knew that a crisis in her life had come. With sudden, clear discernment, she saw the way to make a living for herself and beloved daughter. She must give up pride, a comfortable home life and its seclusion, to be a newspaper woman. From a society reporter she has become an editorial writer whose opinions and influence enter thousands of lives. But while the old silver lining is returning, there is never a thought of leaving the life which is now hers. The illumination of that one hour will remain with her to the last.

IN THE NORTH ROOM

SHE was a farmer's wife from a little town down in the State. Always delicate and weak, her strength had given away entirely. With many sacrifices, but desperate love, her young husband had brought her to a small hospital in this large city, and going there to see a friend one day, I by chance found her. The husband had returned to his farm, and she was all alone, with not a friend in all the great city to bring her a word of hope or a pretty flower.

Something in her white, sad face touched my heart, and, ignoring all rules of conventionality, I entered her open door, and going up to the little narrow, white bed, I said, "My poor sister, my heart goes out to you in your suffering; is there not something I can do for you?"

She looked at me for a moment in startled surprise, then turning her face away, she commenced to cry.

"O," she sobbed, "I am so lonesome and tired. I have been lying here in this bed for five long weeks, with no one to speak to but the doctor and nurse. Not even the sunshine ever comes to my room; north rooms are cheaper, you know. I believe my room is the only room in the hospital without a flower in it, but no one knows me here or cares for me. My husband thinks it won't be long now before I will be able to go home; but the doctor said this morning he was afraid I would never be well again, perhaps never go home. Is n't it dreadful? I have been lying here all day thinking my heart would break if some one did n't come and speak to me. Do you suppose God sent you here?"

My eyes filled with tears as I nodded my reply. There may be many others around us who are waiting for God to send them a friend.

LOST

HAVE you ever watched a bright, beautiful butterfly beating its wings against some barrier, until at last, discouraged and hopeless over futile endeavor, it has dropped to the ground, never to rise again? You wondered—did you not?—why it had so entirely failed to perceive the little opening or crevice, through which it might have glided from oppressing darkness to the clear, blue radiance of the sky?

I have been watching the struggles of a human spirit against that overwhelming anguish and despair which death leaves in a woman's heart when she becomes suddenly widowed.

There was a funeral one day last summer just across the street from my home. A young man—a big fine fellow, a successful, use-

ful citizen, a devoted husband—had become suddenly ill, and in three days was dead. When the slow, sad procession left the house, and the swinging badge of death had been removed from the door, I said to myself, "Ah, that is the end!" It was, however, but the beginning of the end.

Several hours later, near twilight, when the sidewalks and porches were full of gay, chattering people, eager for cool evening breezes, a solitary carriage drove up to the dark, silent house, and a little, black-robed figure entered it alone. It had not been very easy to open the door; the hand that held the key shook and trembled, while hot tears dimmed her eyes, but she was so anxious to shut out the world, with its mocking light and cruel voice. During the days which followed I saw her walking back and forth through her rooms, sometimes wringing her hands, sometimes standing dry-eyed before the portrait of the one she had loved the best

"In a Heap before the Morris Chair."

of all, and then again throwing herself in a heap before the Morris chair—his chair, where he had always sat to read the papers, smoke his cigar, and listen to her bubbling chatter of the day's events.

Of course she had always known, this beautiful, happy young neighbor of mine, that the hand of death is everywhere. Had she not seen little rosy-cheeked children separated from mothers' arms, and fathers taken from homes which needed them so much, and weary old people laid to rest? But her beloved was so strong, so manly, so good.

Death could never be so cruel as to still his warm heart and active mind. There were no pattering baby feet or sweet, chirruping voices in her home to comfort her. He was all she had.

The warm, bright days passed slowly by, and there came cold, gloomy ones; but it mattered not to her sad, grieving heart. The sun had ceased to shine and the birds to sing when

on that day she had laid her soft, quivering lips on his, and found them mute and stiff. Every evening she sat in her window, watching the men come home after a day's toil, to the glad, loving welcome of their wives. She remembered how she used to sit waiting and watching for his familiar swinging stride and cheerful whistle; how he would bound up the steps, take her in his arms, teasingly pull a certain troublesome little curl which always fell over her eyes, and then how they would laugh and talk as if they had been separated days instead of hours.

She tried to be brave, to be calm, to bear her terrible trouble, as had thousands of noble women before her, but always there was a dread, ingulfing feeling in her heart, as if she were being carried to a deep abyss.

Sympathetic friends came to her with their little kindnesses and words of comfort. She listened to them as in a dream. They did not understand. "God is love," this one said.

"You will see him again." "His spirit awaits yours in a better country." But her heart cried out in anguish for his personal existence in this world, where they had been perfectly happy together. It was his hand, his arm, his voice she wanted—so still she brooded.

The sorrowful yearning of a breaking heart brought a little mist to the mind, until gradually it deepened and spread into a dark cloud. Only one thing remained clear to her, she must see him again; he could not, of course, come to her—it only remained for her to go to him. Long ago she had thought it a cowardly deed to take one's life; but it took some courage, after all. She tried to write a little note to her friends, explaining what she was going to do, but the words did not come very easily—it was so hard to think—it did not make very much difference any way, because she was going to him who always understood and loved her.

And so one morning, after they had left her

alone for a little while, they returned to find that she had taken her own life. She had fallen, as did the beautiful butterfly, never to rise again. She had failed to discover the Great Light which could have brought her peace and comfort.

THE SPACE BETWEEN

WHAT a little space lies between happiness and sorrow. The other morning was bright and sunny; down the block an organ wagon was grinding out a merry, rollicking tune. The world seemed a very pleasant and comfortable place to live in after all, when there came a little timid knock on my door. On opening it I found a tall, gaunt woman standing there, whose face showed not only constant exposure to the weather's extremes, but also to the sad and hard things of life.

She looked at me a moment in silence, and then said, "Madam, could I speak to you alone for a few moments?" I hesitated. Something told me the woman was honest and in trouble, but a woman's intuitions are not always her

safest guide, especially in a large city. However, she looked so anxious and worried that I bade her come in.

She began her little story by inquiring if a certain Mr. —— lived in my apartment building. I replied he had until a month before, and then had moved to New York. A look of despair came over her face, but conquering her tears—a habit she was becoming accustomed to—she said:

"I am looking for my husband. My home is in Kansas, and I had been married five years when my husband became dissatisfied and restless. He decided to come to Chicago for work. For a while he wrote to me, but it is four months now since I have heard from him. I waited and waited until I could not stand it out there any longer. I was so desperate that I felt as if I must start out and hunt for him. The last clue I had was that he had gotten work with Mr. M——, but now I do n't know what to do. I have walked and walked, and

kept on hoping, even when everything seemed against me. He used to be good and steady. I can't believe he means to quit me. Do you think there is any one in this city who can help me find him? Where do you suppose he is, and what will become of him?"

The dejection, the sadness of the woman's voice were indescribable. I advised her as best I could, hoping that God would help her where I could not.

But the question is still in my mind:

"Where is he, and what will become of her?"

VICTORY

On his twenty-fifth birthday he felt as if he could well sigh, like the great Alexander, for more worlds to conquer. He had finished his college course by receiving the highest honors the institution offered, won the adoration of the students, the friendship of the faculty, and the admiration of the entire town. His college life had been a series of triumphs, small when measured by outside standards, but sufficiently significant to dower him with self-confidence and determined assurance. The rarest triumph of all he had expected to come immediately after Commencement, when the loveliest girl in the world, whom he most ardently loved, would promise to marry him. But that anticipated hour of exultant joy had been

one of throbbing misery. Instead of sweet words of endearment, she had drawn a chair to some distance and told him with maddening, far-away eyes and a smile that was tantalizingly reminiscent, of her engagement to another man, whose existence he had never, even with uncomfortable vagueness, suspected. The girl possessed remarkable histrionic ability, and during the four years of their friendship had successfully simulated all the beguiling ways and heart charms of Love itself. He had been cruelly deceived, and he thought his life was wrecked.

Abandoning his original intention of studying law he hurriedly accepted a position to teach in a small college on the extreme Western coast. Then he found that the distance of a continent did not separate him from his memory of her; only by getting away from self could he forget. Desperate, reckless, plunging into dissipation anæsthetized the vital part of his sorrow; but, as a deadly sponge,

it absorbed honor and ambition. When his resignation was requested he returned to the East resentfully anxious that the girl he had once cared for should see some of the devastating results of her flirtation. He thought to be avenged, but the girl was so occupied with parties and new gowns that she only had time to call him a fool.

Restless and bitter, he accepted the position of insurance agent in a small town in Virginia, where he hoped the gentle mantle of oblivion would be dropped over his true name. Half-starved and ill, he fell unconscious one day upon the porch of a family who, accustomed to doing good in the byways and hedges of life, were all the more friendly and kind in their ministrations to the needy one brought to their own door. They had hearts of gold, and there was no alloy in their charity. For several weeks he lay in their pretty guest-room, alternately tossing in the wild delirium of fever, or motionless in the heavy calm of stupor. He

had loudly besought Death, who continually hovered in the elusive shadows of the room, to come closer, and be his friend; but, with a curious smile and mocking shrug of the shoulder, the grim figure ignored his outstretched hand and passed from the room.

When the crisis passed, the sick man awoke to find what appeared at first to his dark-accustomed eyes a beautiful ray of yellowest sunshine slowly rocking by his bed. It was the little golden-haired child of the household, who told him, with the confiding sweetness of childhood, that she knew he was going to get well, because she wanted to tell him all the wonderful stories she had been making up about him. He noticed that she innocently omitted any reference to his possible past, but wove delightful little fancies and dreams for his future.

She became a pleasing diversion; but sin makes such a deep abyss in the human heart that only One who is divine can fill in all the

dark crevices. The day for His work began when the little one found pinned to the footboard of his bed the penciled words, "God is No Where." She looked at it with puzzled intentness, and then at the invalid with amused wonderment. "Why, you ignorant man," she exclaimed, merrily, "you can't spell: you have put the 'W' in the wrong place; see, this is where it belongs," and she held up the changed sentence which read, "God is Now Here."

After all, not half the sermons of His little angels have been told.

With God now in his heart, and the little girl's bubbling command in his ears to "go out West and get very, very rich," he took up a claim in Colorado and roughly knocked together a miner's shack for a home. Occasionally he wrote to the little girl, and his letters were as sparkling and enthusiastic as the little stream which ran near his cabin. There were vivid descriptions of the mountains' mighty grandeur, the wonderful echoes

of the canyons, little stories of the thrilling uncertainties in mining when various claims were prospected, planned, dug, and doubted. Nothing was said of unfinished ditches, purposeless shafts, untenable pits, and abandoned engines, nor of the aching poverty of his life, without congenial companionship or well-cooked food. The interior of his home was not described, except the one piece of decoration on the walls, which was a planed board with the painted inscription, "God is Now Here."

After ten years of unceasing toil his vein developed such high-grade ore that an Eastern syndicate bought it at a splendid price. When the money was deposited in a bank he sat down on his cracker-box chair and wrote page after page to "the dear little girl"—for so he always called her. But the letter was not sent, neither was the check of five figures, which he had made out in her name, for, to his surprised mind, came the remembrance that the little girl was

a young woman now almost a stranger. Not trying to control his overwhelming desire to see her, he traveled again to the South.

If the little girl was lovely, the woman she had become was everything a man's heart could ardently long to possess for his own. Without revealing his identity he wooed her, and in time she found in his caressing eyes pictures more beautiful than in her gallery of dreams. The difference in their ages was nothing to her, because she loved him with that complete worship which some women give to a man many years their senior.

At the wedding last month the guests caught a glimpse of heaven in the eyes of the two, who loved each other, and no one doubted but that God was there.

THE PROVING OF A MAN.

"A WORD spoken in due season, how good is it!"

When he announced to his mother that he intended to be a newspaper man, she started suddenly from her chair, but as he explained to her, with enthusiastic expressions and still more eloquent silences, how much the life of a journalist meant to him, she sat back pale and quiet, feeling in her heart one of those dull, sickening sensations which have the power to bring either a pathetic droop to the mouth or a hard glitter to the eye. Afterwards, when he told her that his new work would compel him to leave their comfortable but rather remote suburban home for a room nearer the office—how cheerless the word sounded!—her eyelids quivered, and she prayed hard for two minutes. She knew that at last the time had

come when she must give up her son to the world. He had been such a good boy, so honestly clean in all his ways, so tender, which is a rare quality in any man; but how long as a reporter for a big city daily could he keep unsullied and sweet? Would not the incessant toil and strain of the life, its unhealthy excitement and temptations to so-called "good fellowship," be too much for the boy whose only fault was a will too easily led? Just one little weak spot, but she remembered the story of Achilles and Siegfried,—how Achilles' heel did not get dipped into the fluid which made his body invulnerable, and how a leaf rested between Siegfried's shoulders, so that one tiny spot was not bathed in the liquid which protected the rest of him. One was killed by a wound in the heel, the other by an arrow which struck between the shoulders. If only her lad would put on the whole armor of God, there would be no weak places to succumb to the enemies of goodness.

The boy began his chosen career, rooming in the home of a kind physician, who keenly sympathized with all the hard jolts he received, and generously appreciated his little "scoops." The men at the office called him the "kid"—his face was unusually sincere and frank, he was so childishly eager to do their bidding and flatteringly impressionable concerning the veracity of their reminiscences. The work was pretty hard, and, to his surprise, seemed to be getting harder all the time. The men teased him about his drooping spirits, told him he would not last long on the staff if he did not brace up, bade him be a "good fellow" and join them for a "time," and finally persuaded him that the only way to do real clever, brilliant writing for a newspaper was now and then to take a glass of something stimulating. If he could have seen his mother oftener, and received her loving sympathy when he was jaded and discouraged, he would probably not have commenced to drink.

Before long the doctor and his wife heard the boy falling upstairs to his room at hours later than reporters usually kept. Two or three nights he did not come in at all. One day, when he did not start to work until late in the afternoon, after a morning spent in bed with a sick headache, the doctor called him into his office. "My boy," he said, firmly, "do you know you are going to the bad?" The boy stared with wide, bloodshot eyes, but made no reply. "No person living can keep up the pace you have been going and amount to anything. Do you think it is going to pay you to be a drunkard, break your mother's heart, and become another piece of flotsam and jetsam, to be kicked aside at every turn by a hard world? The only thing for you to do is to leave that newspaper office. There can not be any compromises for you, because you are not as yet a thoroughly equipped soldier." As the boy still sat motionless, the doctor laid a kind hand on his shoulder. "I know, lad, you are all ab-

sorbed in the work, so I 'll tell you what to do, but promise you will follow my prescription, for that is what we 'll call it. Keep on at the office if you feel that you must, but live at home with your mother. Make it a point to catch the last train every night; remember, do n't you ever miss it, and see if you can meet your mother's wise and tender eyes as you used to do. If you can without giving her the least bit of pain, God will bless you in your work. Let me hear how you get on. Will you do so?"

The boy promised, packed his trunk, and left the house. Two months later the doctor received a letter from him dated in Idaho. "You were right, doctor," it read; "that life was too much for me, and I am glad you opened my eyes. I am now private secretary and general utility man for a big mining engineer out here—am living forty miles from the railroad, but mother says she would not mind a little thing like that, so she will be out to spend the summer with me. Hurrah!"

WHEN LOVE MISUNDERSTOOD

SHE was the daughter of the richest farmer in the county, and although her father's money seemed to his old-fashioned point of view an obstacle to ideal happiness he found, as have many others, that theories fall quickly under the powerful scythe of Love. In reality they had been, even as little children, real story-book sweethearts, that is, they had always walked to school together—he proudly swinging her bag of books—she rejoicing in the delicious cake or fruit she could share with him at recess. He helped her through the difficulties of arithmetic and built her a wonderful doll house which did not fall apart for several weeks. She wrote most of his compositions and made him a Sunday necktie from pieces of her best dress. Later when he arrived at the dignified age of long

"Real Story-book Sweethearts."

trousers and did not have to ask permission to go fishing with "the fellows," he liked to lie on his back in the woods and think of her. What did it matter if the sky was a rare pale turquoise, if the birds stirred eagerly over their house-building, if the first butter-cups were growing under his hand or shining fish leaped daringly before him, when he could only think of her.

It was not until she was eighteen and her parents had decided to send her East to school that the perfect understanding of their hearts was expressed in words. Hitherto they had always accepted the fact that happiness meant being together. He had known that she with her lovely little ways, impulsive moods, and merry sweetness could strengthen and content him beyond the reach of thought, and she realized dreamily that she would rather sit alone and think of him than be with any one else. During the four years they were separated she was digging and delving into studies which were

to him only a name, incidentally learning to dance and make "fudges," while he was scattering seeds over broad fields, patiently waiting for them to come forth into yellow waving wheat and ripe splendid corn, and finally gathering them all into a yawning storehouse. Every day letters passed between them which made his work lighter and her dreams sweeter.

Two months after she graduated her father built her a picturesque house on the young man's farm, but further aid was stiffly declined. The first months of their married life seemed a period of time too beautiful to be written about.

Alas, if only the beatific hours of life could be caught and held in a firm grasp, if we could be strong where we are weak, if our souls could ascend the heights we sometimes see in visions! In one year something as subtle and elusive as the blight which may come to the fairest of flowers, or the cloud which can darken the brightest day, was destroying the happiness of the young couple. He began to be worried over

his crops, to spend every daylight hour in the fields, to sit silent and weary in the house, to forget the little ardent expressions of love which were so dear to her. The second year two babies came, instead of one, and the young mother learned what it was to lose hours of sleep, to rock one baby until she could have screamed with nervousness, and then walk with the other until she could drop from fatigue. The smile which once had been so irresistible was put away, as were many other things which helped to make her charming. Although the music in their lives was very faint, there was no discord until she began to break one of the first promises she had made to him, which was never to ask her father for money. When he discovered her deception he said harsh, bitter things and she replied more cruelly, until one night he wandered away. He did not acutally mean to be a coward, but he was tired, desperately tired of everything, and his soul was sick within him.

A week after his disappearance his hat and coat were found on the bank of a large river close by, and, although his body was never recovered, the entire town believed him dead, and a year later her father erected a stately monument to his memory. In the heart of the desolate woman there existed, unchanging and sublime, hope that the man she loved with all the faith and devotion of a resurrected passion was alive, and would some day return to her. When three years later there came, in unknown but suggestively disguised writing, a letter urging her to claim the life insurance, that hope became conviction. Little peculiarities in the penmanship were identified as being individual to him. After that she would not even discuss the question of going home to her father's. She must live the life her husband planned for her, supporting herself and little ones—thus atoning for the unkind things she had said to him.

He had been gone five years when she received the letter she had prayed to her God for

so many lonely heart-breaking nights, telling her if she wished he would come to her at once. The letter was dated from Galveston, which he had reached a few weeks before the fatal storm that became history, and where he had remained ever since working with the crushed despairing ones spared by the awful calamity, and, as she afterwards found out, building a true and lasting monument in the hearts of his fellow-men. Between him and a young minister in the struggling city there developed one of those beautiful friendships so rare among men, and when the Master's servant had heard the other's story he lost no time in showing him his duty, which, after all, was his heart's desire.

The train which carried him North seemed to creep—why did it stop so many times where every delay meant moments lost from the paradise awaiting him? When finally the little home he had often seen in his dreams was reached it was midnight, but from an upper window there gleamed a light. With a run and

bound he had reached that more perfect light which ever shines from a loving woman's face. Two tender arms were flung toward him, and a voice vibrating with the rapturous expectancy of love said softly, "It is all right now, dear lad!"

A TRAGEDY

HAVE you ever stopped to think what sad tragedies arise from simple, almost insignificant causes?

In one of our Northern States a few months ago a large and influential university had just brought another successful and prosperous year to a close. The students had scattered to their various homes. The professors were planning for the summer and the long-looked-for rest which they so urgently needed. In the home of Professor J—— all was excitement and anticipation. A little castle in Spain, or, in more exact language, a summer home for the family, had just been purchased, and the necessary arrangements for taking up a temporary residence there had been completed. One can imagine with what delight the members of this happy

family awaited the day when they could leave the hot, dusty town and hurry away to the cool and shady nooks of the quiet, peaceful country. With what care and thrills of pleasure was each necessary article selected for the new home! What merry discussions, and perhaps strenuous arguments, were held over the different things which "just had to be taken along!"

Then the goods were packed and shipped on ahead to the nearest station, where arrangements were to be made by the head of the family for their final transportation.

Two good-sized wagons were ready for the little group when they stepped from the train. In the smaller and lighter one of the two Professor J—— placed his wife and youngest children, gayly bidding them go ahead and get there first, in order to have a "welcome home" for him when he should reach them.

The other contained the larger and heavier pieces of furniture. On the front seat sat the driver and the eldest son.

Behind them, on the cooking-stove, sat the professor, endeavoring with all his might to steady its falling propensities, because, as he laughingly declared, "although it was not a thing of beauty it was quite necessary to the joy of living." The driver cracked his whip, and the proud little procession started.

Up and down the hills they rode, sometimes over smooth roads, but oftener over rough places. Suddenly the wagon gave a great lurch, the cook-stove tipped over, and with it the professor, who fell down under the heavy wheels, and before the frightened horses could be stopped the wagon had passed over his body, forever extinguishing a bright, strong life. The "welcome home" which he had expected from his loving wife was never to be in this world. With tears of grief his many friends heard the sad news, and the great stream of life flowed on with its ebb and flood of joy and sorrow.

WAITING

A FEW miles out from the center of the city, but in a neighborhood closely settled with eager, busy life, there stands a large red brick building, quaintly conspicuous for its remote style of architecture and the fact that within its walls seventy old ladies have reached their last earthly home. To the thoughtless passer-by the building is "just another institution," with no need for sadness in the thought when the city is so full of them; but to one who believes it a blessed privilege to look upon other lives besides their own, there is occasion for wonder and pity at the sight of this Old Ladies' Home. What stories of heartaches and tragedies, what mysteries and romances, could be told by the white-haired ladies sitting in their small rooms or feebly walking up and down the long corri-

dors as they wait for that gentle summons of the only Father now left them, who soon will take them, one by one, to the real and lasting home He has been keeping for them so many years!

The day of their wedding was as perfect as they expected the union of their lives to be. He was a rich young banker, well able to give her the finest home in that small Eastern city, and she was beautiful and proud, even as proud and commanding as he had always declared the woman he chose for his wife must be. He had never cared for small, timid women, and she was tall and resolute; the fact that she was poor affected him not at all, because intuitively he knew that she considered she was giving far more than she was receiving. For fifteen years they lived together, and not once did they cease to be thoroughly interesting to each other. It was her proud spirit alone which made such an ideal condition possible. With her

marriage vows she had determined, with all the strength of an unalterable will, that her husband should never find her a failure even in the lightest evasive meaning of the word. She had swayed the society of the city with such charm and originality that her entertainments became traditions. She had conquered even unknown enemies, which proved to them she was an unusual woman. After the birth of her son and daughter she had turned her will a little more seriously upon her husband's business, because she wanted her children's future assured of material blessings.

His sudden death was a great shock to her, and the world thought she was almost heartlessly brave. They did not know how many years his loss was to be to her a live, unyielding sorrow, which even her stanch proud heart bowed helplessly to, in the long lonely hours of the night, and felt with sudden poignant pain in the midst of a crowd. She had one supreme passion and interest in life, and that

was the future of her children. For them alone she thought, planned, and resolved. Too ambitious, she risked a part of her fortune in an investment which proved to be only a delusion. This blow was a severe one, but later in the same year another occurred which almost took the ability to weep away from her. The young daughter just sixteen—beginning to show the fresh elusive beauty of a spring flower—met with one of those hideous accidents which leave the victim blighted in mind and body.

The proud mother retired a little from the unbearable, pitying eyes of the world, and abandoned herself to the sublime task of compensation, endeavoring with all the marvelous love of a bruised mother-heart to make up to the daughter—still a child—the joys she had lost. At her direction the son adopted a business career, and always, when following her wise suggestions, he was successful. Alas for the "might have beens" which form human history!

In a moment of mistaken independence he failed to follow one of her suggestions, and all of their money and property were lost. When he fully realized that his mother and helpless sister were penniless he had not the courage to see them again alive. It was his mute dead face which asked his mother's pardon, and though it was hard—her God alone knew how hard—it was granted. For several years she struggled bravely along in tiny rooms. For the daughter's sake she humbly accepted the timidly offered ministrations of friends. The anonymous gifts, the dainty lunches, the bowls of soup, were only received to keep the crippled one alive. If her capricious, delicate appetite could be tempted, what matter if she lay awake at night faint from nourishment?

When at last thoroughly convinced that the Home for Incurables could do more for the beloved child than she could, she gave her up. Then a round of patient, unceasing visits to officials followed until permission was received

to live at the Home also. At last the daughter died, and the mother was left alone.

Unable to support herself, and too proud to live year after year upon the bounty of kind friends, however tactful, she decided to enter the Old Ladies' Home. A senator in Washington sent her at this time a check for the entrance fee. He had been a college chum of her son, and "believed" he had once borrowed this sum from his friend.

To-day, although eighty-six years of age, she walks through the parlors and halls of the Home with erect carriage. Her head is still held high, her chin is as determined as ever. Never once does she allow old age to interfere with the careful daintiness of her attire. In every line of her figure and tone of her voice she suggests the grand lady who has submitted with royal acquiescence to the calamities of her life. When death at last approaches her he will find not only a woman but a queen awaiting his coming.

THE STRUGGLE

MOST of us are apt to consider success a tree filled with rich fruit, which now and then drops on some fortunate passer-by a delicious plum. We regret that it did not occur to us to stand under the tree at the same time the lucky one did, and catch a prize in our basket. But success, in reality, is a tree with such slippery bark that one who would climb it finds it very much easier to fall back than to go upwards, and on its branches are sharp thorns which cruelly wound, and even on the topmost limb, when about to seize the coveted prize, a hostile wind may suddenly hurl the persevering one back to the ground. If, however, the ambitious soul attains his desire, we consider only the *result* of his labors instead of the *struggle.*

Down on the farm everything was peaceful and quiet, as are most Sundays in the country. The farmer was lying on the old sofa in the sitting-room, taking the one afternoon rest he allowed himself during the week. His wife, deeming it a luxury only permissible on the "Lord's Day," had opened the front parlor, carrying with her the two weekly religious papers which she had been saving on the clock shelf for this hour of enjoyment. The young daughter sauntered slowly along the path toward the sloping orchard. It was the one place when her home seemed unbearable and the longing unrest in her heart could not be quieted.

It was here that the silk on the distant stalks of yellow corn looked to her like the golden-tangled hair of little children; while the brown and yellow bees made love to the ruddy clover, which blushed a deeper hue under their sweet kisses; and the wild flowers played in riotous abandon with the long meadow grass. Ah, yes! she

was right; it was the best place on all the farm to have fancies and dreams; but the time had come when nothing but fulfillment could satisfy her desires. It was not enough to come out to the orchard and have duets with the merry robins. The sweet echo of her voice as it trilled and caroled to happy birds nesting in far-away trees did not content her. She must sing to another audience; she must triumph over circumstances, and not let circumstances baffle her. That was the only way to grow and to reach the Kingdom of her Heart's Desire.

With a new resolution and plan just beginning to form in her mind she hurriedly returned to the house for her sunbonnet, and then started down the dusty road. When she reached the town she went to the home of the only banker in the place. As she had hoped, she found that gentleman of means sitting on the porch. Taking off her sunbonnet, but not permitting her host to bring another

"She Started Down the Dusty Road."

chair, the girl sat down on the railing and began with trembling lips but eyes that flashed fire: "Mr. B——, I want to leave the farm; I want to go away from this town to Boston where I can study music, and I want—O, Mr. B——, I want you to please loan me five hundred dollars." The banker sat up very straight and whistled. What was the girl talking about? She began to swing her bonnet nervously, but continued: "Every cent of the money will be paid back, also the interest, because I am honest and because I shall work so hard that I can not help but succeed. Will you not give me my chance?" The girl was not pretty, but she possessed a personality. It told the financier many things she was not able to express in words; but being a man of convictions instead of moods and impulses, he only looked at her steadily, and said: "This is not the day for business. Come to my office to-morrow morning, and we will talk over your plans."

The next day the girl arose before day-

break, finished her work, and again took the long walk to town. Two hours later, with the banker's check in her hand, the same distance seemed to her a shady grove filled with heavenly music.

The first year in the East was a strange and delightful one, yet at its close came an overwhelming disappointment. Her teachers agreed that it was a mistake to cultivate the small voice she possessed, but urged her to give all her time to the piano.

The second year was a hard one. It took more self-denial than she had dreamed of to make the borrowed money extend over the required time, and the knowledge that she had only made a beginning in her art was not exactly comforting. After two years of house work in the banker's family the first debt was canceled, and another five hundred dollars was borrowed. The next two years in Boston were industrious ones, but the reward was a diploma and a year's scholarship at a foreign

conservatory. The European trip had to be postponed until enough music lessons were given to enable her to settle the final obligation with the banker, but eventually she did go abroad, not once, but several times. Fifteen years have elapsed since that illuminating hour in the orchard, and if she has not attained world-wide fame, nevertheless her place in the music circles of this city is a coveted one, and she is still pluckily reaching after the choicest fruit on the tree of success.

THE CROWNING GIFT

Her home had always been in a Missouri mining town, where with her mother, grandfather, and six younger brothers and sisters, whose names were changed every year to suit the pleasures of "Mam," who "Grandpap" declared was "fearful foolish-like for excitement," she helped to run what was known as "The Pinnacle Eating House." It was "Mam's" privilege, after she had pronounced with much staccato eloquence to each new boarder the names of her children, to add the amazing news that her eldest daughter had never cried but twice in her life. The fact that she was accustomed sentimentally to monopolize that Fount of Tears which unfortunately belongs to every family, she ignored mentioning. The miners,

however, felt no need for this bit of lachrymose intelligence, for, though their faces were generally grimy with coal-dust, their sight remained unclouded, and the vision of "Mam" washing the dishes with tears, or literally swimming across the tattered pages of "Beyond Pardon," furnished them a daily comedy.

But somehow they never wanted to chuckle when "Mam" with circumlocutory pride related the details of her daughter's two surrenders to disappointment. They had occurred before the child was ten years old. The first barb in Sorrow's arrow cut deep into the little, ambitious, but obedient heart. It was when "Grandpap" told her she could not be spared from home to get any "school larning," but must "become suited with something else." She did not know how that could be until Bill Cass, with a heart as big as his boots, helped her to read and write from the newspapers which the men kept wrapped around their tobacco.

The second barb left a scar in her heart.

It was when she had bought with pennies, so long saved as to be almost worn out with kisses, a bar of pink soap which was to satisfy the æsthetic craving of her nature and fragrantly cleanse the rough black hands of the miners. Laughing loudly the men had rejected the gift, and even "Big Bill" could not console her, for he too had failed to understand the rare unselfishness of the child.

After that occasion she never gave way to tears. When exhausted with heavy work and longing to abandon herself to emotions long suppressed, she would hurry to the woods, where in profound silence and shadow, shut out from human association, she would lie close to the throbbing heart of Nature and pour out all her griefs and hopes to the Divine Father. At twenty she married Big Bill, because he had always been kind to the children, coming nearer than any one else to understanding her dreamy nature, and because she had mistaken the little glow of gratitude which came to her lonely

heart when he asked her to marry him for the deep fire of lasting love. Through two years of her wifehood there was a smile on her lips, Bill was always kind, and a sob in her heart. One day Bill disappeared, and two hundred dollars of the Missouri Miners' Union could also not be found. With true heroism and beautiful loyalty to a man she had never loved, she hung up a sign, "Washing Wanted," and went to work to refund the lost money. It was not until every penny had been paid that she discovered "Big Bill" had forfeited his life in guarding the money carefully concealed beneath his leather belt.

The next event on her soul's calendar—for do we not measure time by our emotions?—was at an entertainment given in the unplastered church of the town. A young man had read some poems and shown a few pictures, but in their simple beauty there lay the power to reveal to her the radiant light of a new purpose, which was to change her entire life.

Why could she not write down some of the visions and fancies which came to her sometimes in the woods? Looking into the lives of the birds and the clouds she had heard a pathetic song, from the golden-legged bee she had listened to gentle lyrics, and down in the heart of the wild flowers where the pistil and stamens nestled closely together she had seen a love story.

When her book of love and dreams went to find a publisher she sent with it in her ignorance a small picture of herself. The book was too crude and imperfect for publication, but one of the readers saw with the assistance of the independent fearless eyes, but tender, soft mouth of the author, glimpses of real talent. He was a man who had run almost the whole gamut of human experiences. In his early youth he had been the blackest sheep of the town, to make a living he had entered the ministry, and because his salary had not been paid regularly and his heart was full of sin, he had

embezzled trusted sums, and was consequently sent to the State penitentiary. The change of environment had effected his redemption, and as the alert and brilliant critic of a large publishing-house he had successfully lived down his past.

Deciding personally to return the manuscript to the small Missouri town, he was able to meet the fine ambitious woman who had sent it. The trials of her life had never been able to absorb the exquisite sweetness of her nature, and as he helped her revise and correct the book he found her personality had taken complete possession of his heart. When he told her she was in all the world his true beloved, her eyes for the third time in her life filled with tears, and, holding out her hands to him, she cried: "O, my dear one—at last I have found some one I can love utterly, whose soul is knit to mine. Together we will write the book of our hopes and dreams."

HER STORY

THE other morning I looked at life through the eyes of a deaconess, a gentle, sympathetic little woman, whose sweet face, so becomingly framed in the modest bonnet and snowy tie, quite won my heart.

"Tell me," I asked, drawing my chair up close to hers, "something about life, just common, every-day life, as you see and hear it in the many homes and institutions you visit."

She looked out of the window a few moments before replying. What sorrowful scenes, unhappy stories, pathetic incidents, were passing through her mind? I wondered. Did she ever grow weary in well doing? Were all the sacrifices, self-denials, and hard work really worth the while?

And then she began to tell me about her work; how happy she was in it; the great need of more workers; how she often wished she never had to take the time to eat, sleep, or rest, because always some soul was sinking down, down, down, when a little touch from some loving woman's hand might save.

As she talked a tremor came to her voice, bright color to her cheeks, and that glad shining light to her eyes, which is only caused by some deep inward happiness.

"It is hard to believe," she said, "that there are many, O so many, people in our city who are hungry all the time. I have known men for weeks to eat not a single whole meal, but only now and then a few scraps begged on the street or pilfered from some store. I know a man who lived alone in a garret, a cripple, who subsisted for weeks on five cents a day. Then there was a small boy who came once to one of our free Thanksgiving dinners, who, because he was so hungry—it was the

first big meal of his life—ate so much that he lay ill in a hospital for days, in a delirium, hovering between life and death. Another case I recall was of a man who told me he was hungry, and to whom I gave a ticket to a restaurant where our institution has a contract to feed men in such distress. His pale face and gaunt figure appealed to me, and I went with him. After finishing one of those large five course 'regulars' of Third Avenue, he still looked so longingly at the empty plates that I suggested he begin again; and once more he commenced with soup and ended with pudding; and yet a third time did he go through the menu. He was more than hungry, he was starving.

"The sorrow of the children might fill volumes. Think how little joy and happiness there is in the lives of many of them. We took a crowd from one of the slums last summer to a park picnic. It was the first time one of the little girls had ever seen Lake

Michigan, a flower, or a plot of grass in her life, or even had a ride of any kind. Afterwards we gave that same child a short outing on a nice big farm. We were amused, yet touched, to discover, when meeting her at the train, a little brown egg clasped in her hands. She explained she wanted her mamma to see an egg that a hen made all itself. You would be surprised to see what a wonderful, intense love some of our poor, little, ragged, dirty boys have for flowers. One of our deaconesses in the Halstead Street district has found that she can manage a rough, noisy crowd by giving them bright, red geraniums. They guard them very jealously, and wear them even after they are old and faded.

"The ragged, almost naked, condition of some of the poor can not be exaggerated. We found once an old woman—an invalid for six years—who had not had a whole pair of stockings in that time. Two bright little girls in one of the Sunday-schools could not be induced

to take part in a little drill because they were ashamed to get upon the platform barefooted and without any underwear on. Another case was that of a family who had once been respectable, but who had fallen so low that when their only support—a young newsboy—died, they kept him in the house for days, too proud to call in any one who could see their poverty and wretchedness."

As I listened to the stories of this "ministering angel" I thought regretfully of the narrow, selfish, empty lives so many of us are leading. We seem to be always waiting for some great occasion, some direct revelation, when our hands, our brains, our hearts are needed every day in this world around us.

THE TRUE INSPIRATION

When she graduated from the village high-school her family drew a breath of relief and satisfaction. They had never thought it possible that she, with such a frail constitution, could complete the long hard course. Had they not watched her slight, stooped figure wearily walking back and forth each day to school, fearing that every step would be the last? Had they not seen the ambitious girl bending over her books late in the night, unmindful of throbbing head and strained eyes? But at last the long tension was over. The school-work had come to an end, and she could stay at home to be coddled and petted to their hearts' desire. They would see to it that no more strain or

hardships came to her. She should be their dear invalid whose health and comfort were their constant thought and loving desire.

For a few days after Commencement the young girl seemed quite content to lie on the couch, swing idly in the hammock, or drive around the sleepy, soothing little town. But very soon the family noticed a restless desire for change. She seemed to be discontented, unsettled, and made several unexplained visits away from home. One day she suddenly arose from the easy chair, and said, with startling energy and determination: "Please give me your attention, dear people, for I have an important announcement to make. I am going to be a trained nurse. I have talked it all over with Dr. C——, and he says if I can get a hospital appointment, it will not hurt me to try it for three months. Do not refuse to let me go, for my whole heart and soul are in this plan."

The family gazed at her in amazement.

Was their daughter losing her mind?

Did she not herself need nursing and careful attention?

Why, the idea was too absurd to notice!

So the summer passed by. The girl grew pale and silent, and finally settled into a despondent lethargy, which all their love and solicitude could not change. Nothing aroused or interested her but new cases of illness in the village and the manuals and guides to nursing, which she had sent for.

The family recalled when she was a child that only the sick dolls, not the well ones, interested her. They remembered with what calmness and real skill she had bound little cut fingers of playmates, and how once she had begged to nurse two of them who had the measles.

Finally the girl's drooping spirits made the family uneasy, so the doctor was sent for. After he had left they realized with vague comprehension that their "invalid" was to go to a nurses' training-school in a near-by

city. A new color came to the girl's cheeks, a new happiness to her eyes, as she made the necessary preparations for departure.

The day after reaching the city she eagerly and joyously started for the hospital. Her heart beat with tenderness and sympathy as she was shown through the wards of suffering ones. How she longed to be among them, soothing and healing! She knew what it was to grit teeth, clench the hands, and turn the head to the wall as waves of pain swept over one. Her whole thought and aim in life was to stand between, men, women, and children and pain.

Four weeks passed slowly by before her application was accepted. No society debutante, no young bride, ever donned the all-important gown with more thrills and quivers of delight than did this young girl her plain striped nurse's dress. No queen could be prouder of her crown than she was of her little white cap.

It was no easy vocation she had undertaken,

but never did she become hopeless and discouraged. The regular hours and the required exercise, of course, did much to make her strong, but the satisfaction and happiness in knowing the dream of her life was being realized made the once delicate, weak girl a useful and strong woman. She had found a place for herself in life, and many a poor, suffering one has murmured words of gratitude and blessing over her soft, gentle ministrations.

THE CONTINUAL SHADOW

"THERE are certain sayings," began one of the ladies sitting on the porch, "which we hear so often that we lose their full meaning. From constant repetition their significance has become dulled. Now take, for instance, the saying, 'In the midst of life we are in death.' Of course I have heard that since I was a child and vaguely realized its truth every time I looked in the daily paper, but the real force of the words was brought home to me last winter in such a startling manner I can never forget it.

"It was a very cold night, and my little girl and I were alone, my husband having gone out of town for a few days. As we lived in a first-floor apartment I was somewhat nervous and had retired early. At half-

past eleven—I looked at the clock to be exact—I was aroused by some one knocking loudly on my hall door and a man's voice crying, 'Open this door at once and let me in. Hurry! Hurry!' I got up and lit the gas, but felt too timid to let a stranger in my home at that time of the night. You know to what lengths of daring thieves can go, so I thought this was one of their schemes to entrap me into opening the door. Any way I felt that I must wait and see what would happen next. After the knocking ceased I heard the man run around to the front window and tap on the glass, calling, 'Have mercy! Have pity and open your front door. I am in terrible trouble.'

"With a courage born of the moment I threw on a lounging robe and hurried into the outer hall. There stood a little old man, his face blanched and terrified, his whole body trembling with some strong emotion. 'O,' he cried, taking hold of my hand and leading

me to the building's entrance. 'Come quickly. She is lying out on the stoop—my wife—I do n't know what is the matter.' On the steps I found a sweet-looking old lady, with curls as white as the snow which they lay against. When I lifted up her head and she made no sound or movement, I, too, became frightened and told the old man, who was standing by wringing his hands and calling her by endearing names, that we had better carry her into the house. It was not hard to do so, because she was a very small, frail woman.

"After laying her on the bed I rang up a doctor, and while waiting for him to come the old gentleman explained that they lived only around the corner, and had been spending the evening in the block below with some old friends. They had enjoyed themselves very much, and were merrily plodding along through the snow when his wife with just one cry of pain sank down on the walk unconscious. He had gotten her up on my step, but could not

arouse her. It was such a brief little story he told me as he sat beside the bed, patting his beloved's hand and stroking her hair, while all the time the tears were falling down his quivering face. When the doctor came and made an examination with the stethoscope, he uttered only one word, but its poignant meaning caused the old man to fall on his knees, crying with broken heart, 'My dearest, my dearest! You have left me all alone!' "

For a few moments there was perfect silence on the porch. Each of the ladies looked steadily down at her embroidery, except one who never did fancy work, but who could prove by the ink-stains on her fingers that they were not always idle. "I, too," she said, leaving the hammock and drawing nearer to the group, "had a sad experience last winter which again proves the truth of that saying. It occurred when I was new in journalistic work and thought it all perfectly lovely and

exciting. I did not anticipate then anything harder than a 'call down' from the city editor, or a request to interview some one who positively had nothing to say. Neither did I dream of the time which was coming when I could not sleep at night for thinking of the dreadful stories and tragic sights which had come to me.

"One day I was sent on an assignment to investigate what was being done for the Foundlings of the city. Through police stations, 'baby-farms,' and asylums I went to gather material for the story. It happened in one of the latter institutions—a big well-known place, whose name I must not tell for fear of prejudicing you. I was upstairs in a large room where there were almost a hundred little ones. Some were crying, some were asleep, and some were busy with their bottles. There was one baby, however, who was doing none of these things. She was lying quite still, her great blue eyes staring up at the

ceiling. The beautiful color of her eyes reminded me of the little girl I love the best of all, and so impulsively I leaned over the white crib and caressed her tiny cheeks. It was such a piteous little smile which met my own, and somehow I could not help but say to myself, 'O, why does not some one love this little dear heart and give it a home?' The nurses in the room were all busy, the baby looked at me so wistfully that I made up my mind I would love her for ten minutes and cuddle her to her heart's content. I drew a low rocker up to the fire and uncovered to the warm blaze the wee feet which felt so startlingly like ice. At first the little head moved feebly on my arm; once or twice I heard a soft moan, and after a while it lay very still. Thinking it had gone to sleep, I kept on gently rocking back and forth. One of the nurses passing by said, 'It is a good thing that child 's asleep. It has n't had very much of a hold on life.' Not two minutes

L. of C.

afterward another nurse came up to look at the little one. Her face turned suddenly pale, but she gave me a kind glance as she said, 'Madam, the baby is dead. Let me relieve you.'

"When I gave up the little foundling who had died in my arms I could only say softly, 'It has a home now. Some one loves it at last.' "

REALIZATION

To THE passer-by it was just a large, ordinary moving-van, brick-colored, with high white letters, driving slowly up to a small apartment building on a side street, but to the laughing young woman leaning out of the bay window on an upper floor the huge wagon was a vehicle of the most vital significance. Every spoke in its wheels, every letter of the owner's name, seemed to possess a live importance, and no gorgeous fairy chariot could have appeared to her half as beautiful. For two hours she had been sitting on the window-sill in her tiny parlor or dancing a two-step across the bare floor with her little daughter, while she waited for the great wagon to come, which was to carry her household treasures away.

As she watched each article of furniture carried down the steps, sometimes a happy tear or two came to her eyes, sometimes she chattered gayly to the little child beside her, or gave a direction to the men below, while all the time she breathed hard from the excitement which thrilled her. What if something should happen to that beloved piano before the two big darkies could get it safely off their backs and into the van? Of all their belongings she knew her husband cherished the piano most, because he could while away on its keys many an hour of rest and diversion. It was all the same to him, rag-time or nocturne, if he could only forget the annoying perplexities of his work. If the piano did not afford him the relaxation he wanted, there was his banjo, and certainly, with a pile of pillows under his head and some old college melodies to sing, he could then find enjoyment.

Yet dearer than all else to the young woman was the heavy box of books standing on the

pavement. She had wanted to apologize to her treasures for keeping them even temporarily in such dark, ugly quarters, because, to her, books were human. Had they not comforted and amused her when other friends had proved faithless or stupid? Never had she allowed a glass door to her book-shelves, for to preserve in "cold storage" anything as necessary to her daily living and enjoyment would have been really absurd, if not cruel. Beside the books stood her desk—a shabby, feeble piece of furniture; but as a delicate child is ever closest to the mother's heart, so was she fond of it, and in every curve and corner there lurked memories which she could never forget, and would not if she could. Old-fashioned, yes; but all the lessons of her college life had been studied before it, and the love-letters to the man who best satisfied her were written on it, and the happiness of living in a world of her own creation had come from it.

Among the last things to go into the wagon was their pretty dining-table, and a shining mist came to her eyes as she watched it. How closely it represented all the love in her happy married life! The exultation she had felt when, after several weeks' illness, she could resume her own place and once more pour her husband's coffee, equaled the pride of a queen on her throne; but more joyous than any other hour at the little round table was the time when the baby—their own little baby—could sit up in a high chair with them and be one of the family.

At last, when all the goods were in the van and it moved heavily down the street, the young woman pulled the little child close to her. "Just to think, Precious," she cried, "all our things have gone to a truly and really home of their own. Don't you think they ought to shout and sing as they ride through the streets away from all the smoke and dirt? It is so fresh and clean out in that pretty

"A Truly and Really Home."

suburb where they are going. The grass and trees are really green and not a make-believe color, and the flowers have the fragrance God intended they should have. O, do n't you ever, little heart of gold, give up dreaming dreams; for sometimes, if you wait long enough, they come true. Almost the sweetest dream mother ever had is going to be realized to-night, for then you and father and I will be living in a home of our own." The little child laughed too, for when mother was happy the sun shone, the birds sang, and the whole world was as it should be, for mother was the whole world to her.

Laughing and dancing the two went through the small flat, and as she pulled down the shades and locked the doors the young woman talked to the child in the monologue fashion many mothers adopt who are much alone with their little ones.

"Can you really believe, sweetest, that we are not going to live on this perch any longer?

that we do not have to exist another single day in what is only a round to a ladder? We would rather not stay quite so near the skies yet, or have such a close acquaintance with the man in the moon, and we prefer a different environment from street-cars and cluttered back-yards of stores. Often we would like a little fresh air without having to put on our hats and gloves and walk the streets for it. It would be more comfortable also to cross the streets without wishing we had taken out an accident policy on our lives. We know we would feel cleaner if our clothes could hang out to dry just once in the beautiful bleaching sunshine instead of in a dark basement. We want our own front door and our own roof; yes, we want our own place in this dear old world, and not be annexed to families whose names we do not know. O, mother's child, just once more you are going to hear what we will have at that blessed little home we are going to to-day.

"First, because you never played in one before, there is the yard, and no one will scold if you do run on the grass. You shall have a wee flower-bed, and you can buy the seeds for it to-morrow with the pennies you have been saving, and mother is going to have a garden too. She won't spend quite as much time on hers as did the lady across the ocean called 'Elizabeth,' but she will love every tiny blade of green she finds in it. Father is going to have some chickens—why, we may make a farmer of him yet! Then we will have a long porch, with a hammock for you to rock the dollies in between times; and in the top of the house there is a great attic for you to play in with your little friends on rainy days, and perhaps when you are a young lady we will have a regular story-book chest up there, filled with old satins and brocades. In our living-room (we won't care for a parlor) we are going to have the biggest fireplace and on cold winter nights we 'll turn

down the lights and see the sweetest stories in its crackling blaze. O, baby, baby"—and the young woman's voice trembled—"are n't you glad this is n't just a story mother is telling you, for we do want the real sometimes instead of the make-believe? Yes, we are going now—at last." Then the door was shut, and the young woman and little child went quietly down the stairs.

THE SONG IN THE FACTORY

It was a lovely spring day. The sun shone so warmly and brightly that one could not help thinking of what he would soon do—drawing out the tiny buds, grassy blades, and fragrant flowers with his balmy and sweet persuasiveness.

But in that large factory on the northwest side of the city there was little to suggest the coming of spring's carnival, unless it was that the dim, grimy windows were wide open for the first time in months. The atmosphere of the shop-room where seventy-five girls were making pants for a down-town store seemed even more close and stifling. The noises of the outside world mingling with the never-ceasing throbbing of the engines and shrill clatter of the mighty wheels made an indescribable din.

At a machine which stamped on hundreds of buttons a day sat a young girl whose shabby dress was hidden by her long, checked apron. Only her American nationality and the startling expression of weary unhappiness on her face particularly distinguished her from the Polish and Italian girls gathered in the room. While the others rushed through their work with no time for outdoor scenes, a glance at the clock, or even at each other—for they were working by the piece, and each lost moment meant one lost penny—this young girl listlessly lingered over every article she picked up. Sometimes her hands fumbled clumsily, and again they were quiet. Once the inspector spoke to her sharply, but the only result from his words was a deepening of the expression on her face. "O, what 's the use?" she said to herself; "work, work, work! Nothing but work! Where does any fun come in? Pa would get drunk just as often, even if I slaved my fingers off; and ma—well, I never thought

she would become quite so lazy. Wonder if anything could arouse her! Time was when washing, tidying up the house a bit, and having something decent cooked for me when I got home, was n't such a terrible hardship to ma. I guess she thinks there ain't no use doing things any more, but I really thought she 'd be mad when I told her Barry Holmes had asked me to go to a dance down at Logan's Hall to-night. Used to be she 'd say she would rather see me dead than go with a fellow like him. Guess ma 's changed a whole lot since pa lost his place and took to drinking instead of finding another job; for all she said this morning was, 'Suppose you 'll go. It 's kind of hard for girls not to have any good times!' Hard! I should say it was. But it ain't dances and shows I 'm hankering after as much as it is to get away and forget things for a while. Wish I could forget this old shop and all the poor meanness of living, for just a little while."

In the midst of the girl's discontented, bit-

ter reverie the first warning sounds of the noon whistles began to blow. When the steam in the noisy shop-room was turned off, the other workers made quick hungry movements toward their little newspaper-covered bundles of lunch. This girl opened hers contemptuously. She had seen the pieces of bread ma had sawed off with a dull knife, and had smelt the butter with which this was spread. She thought regretfully of the red apple she had meant to buy at the fruit-stand, but had forgotten.

Suddenly there was a surprised silence in the room. The door had opened, admitting a sweet-faced young woman, followed by one of the factory engineers carrying what seemed to be a large, black box, but which disclosed a tiny organ. With a friendly smile, which seemed to be at every girl in the room, the young woman announced that she was from the near-by Association House Settlement, and had made arrangements with the superintendent of their factory to permit her

to come once a week during the noon hour to get acquainted with them. Sometimes they would have a little song service together; again, some friend who had been across the ocean would tell them of the sights and wonders in foreign lands, or perhaps some one would read aloud an interesting story. After she had told them of the purpose and aim of the Association House, of its girls' club, and of the welcome each of them would always receive there, she asked her astonished listeners if they would like to have her sing. With the memory of the gay, rollicking songs they had heard in concert halls and on the streets the girls gladly assented. As the beautiful music of that sweet voice floated out through the room, the girls sat very still to catch every word of the wondrous song,

> "I have a Friend, O such a Friend!
> He is good, so good to me."

The face of the girl near the button-machine brightened. This was the best music she had

heard for a long time, she thought. There was something very appealing in the tremor of the singer's voice; quite soon the lovely meaning of the words echoing now so softly through the room brought a rush of warm, tender feeling to her heart. Something tightened in her throat; she choked back a sob, but somehow she felt happy.

When the one o'clock whistle started the steam again, the young woman put the organ under the table and went away. The girl stamped on buttons through the long afternoon as one in a dream. At six o'clock she handed in her work and started home. She remembered she had promised to meet Barry at the corner and tell him whether she would go to the dance. She did not exactly want to go, but home was not very pleasant. She thought she would just walk by this Association House and see what it was like. As she was about to turn her steps, a winning voice cried out, "Are you going my way?" It was the noon visitor. As

they walked along the streets, the young woman chatted merrily about the Association House and all they did there, while the girl listened wistfully. Suddenly the speaker stopped and said with a charming appeal no one could resist, "By the way, to-morrow is my birthday, and I have the privilege of inviting two of my friends to dinner and to spend the evening with me at the House. Won't you come, and bring a sister or friend?" Instantly a gleam of radiant hope came to the girl. "I would like," she said hesitatingly, "to bring ma, if you do not mind. She does not get invited out much," and she did not add, "nor do I."

Speeding homeward she had only a word for Barry waiting impatiently at the corner. "Can't go to-night. Ma and I have an engagement for to-morrow night, and we 'll be busy getting ready for it after dinner." The thought of the changes she would have to make in her wardrobe, of the errand down to

Milwaukee Avenue for a new lace collar to cover ma's old black satin waist, prevented her from noticing Barry's angry look.

Whether it was the new light in the girl's face, the pleasure of an invitation to dinner, or the relief she felt that her daughter did not go to the dance, which caused "ma" to straighten up the house the next day, we do not know. She said it was to have a clean place to spread out their party clothes.

The evening spent at the Association House was a revelation to the discouraged daughter and despondent mother. The sight of the clean, bright rooms, the serving of the well-cooked dinner, the atmosphere of industry, kindness, and good fellowship, opened a new and happy page in their lives, from which it is to be hoped they will not turn back.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN

NEVER, she said to herself as she stood in front of the long glass studying the lovely lines and curves of her form in the new gown, had such a radiant face smiled back at her from the mirror. What did it matter any way if she was almost thirty-five—that dread age when women can only *pretend* to possess the youth which has slipped away from them? She had never found it necessary to begin any of those tyrannical arts and pitiful subterfuges which but accentuate a woman's acquaintance with the grim jester, Time. To her the moment had not arrived when she was grateful for some one's chance remark that she looked young. There were exactly five white hairs hidden away among her

many brown ones; but as long as she could count them—well, they did not count at all. And that curved wrinkle around her mouth—why, that was only a tiny sign-post to a merry disposition. She knew that her world would continue to exclaim over her youthful appearance for many a day, just as they would unconsciously look their admiration. What was it, she wondered, leaning close to the glass, which caused friends joyously, and enemies helplessly, to admit she was "a charming woman?" To be sure her contour was rarely good, and it was easy to smile—her teeth were even and white—but was there not something deeper, which came perhaps from the heart, and could not be affected by the years, that made her attractive to all?

"If ever you were sweet, irresistible, and altogether charming, my friend, please be so this afternoon," she whispered, nodding to the dark head before her, "because *he* is down-stairs on the porch waiting for you after two long years." The last words quivered on her lips

while she steadied herself against the dresser trying to calm the rapturous thrill which made her entire body tremble as she recalled the exquisite anticipations that had, she felt, kept them near to one another through the long silences of those months of separation.

Her husband had been dead two months when she first met the man down-stairs, and because the pain of her widowhood came from the mind instead of the heart, she was able to realize all that his eyes and voice desired to teach her. But—and is it not a woman's noblest instinct to place the man she loves on the highest pinnacle of goodness, even though she is content to remain human and idolatrous?—she had sent him from her. Her soul, however, had besought his to remain true and loyal through the days they were to remain apart. She was naturally gay and thoughtless, and, like all impulsive persons, much given to dangerous experiments with human nature, but all that was best within her demanded the highest of the

man she loved. She would have him keep faith with the spiritual as well as the temporal portion of existence.

At the door of her room she hesitated, looking down at the golden pledge on her finger, which had united her to the one who was dead. Yes, it was right to lay it aside now—if only she could place with it the memories of other days. She was jealous and regretful that she could not give all to him. There had been nothing tragical, or even keenly intolerable, in the years of her married life. As an impatient young woman, wearied with being her own breadwinner and irritated, so she thought, beyond endurance with miserable economies, she had accepted a rich wooer's bank account and his twenty odd years of seniority. What other wish could she ever have than to be protected, adored, and indulged? Alas! the adoring one had all the usual whims and caprices of a self-indulgent man, and the knowledge had come to her with the poignancy of soul-loneliness that

"At the Door She Hesitated."

life did contain more exquisite joys than cashing checks.

When she had finished her communion with herself she started quickly down the stairs—to hear again his voice with its slow drawl, to see his tender, worshiping smile, and watch the little familiar gestures she with love's accuracy remembered. Ah! could she bear the happiness of it? The very atmosphere when he was near seemed to vibrate to the music that their hearts were one. The thought of the joyous years of harmony before them illumined her face with a divine glow. Through the long low windows of the parlor she saw him rocking on the veranda. Just for one moment she would stand behind the curtain and see him as he was—unconscious of her proximity. Woman-like, she wanted to revel in his ardor and impatience for her coming. As she reached the window his head was turned toward the approaching steps of some one on the pavement. There was in his face something which suddenly arrested her at-

tention. Was it the new lines around the mouth or the sensuous curve to the lips which gave him that subtle, evil expression? When he leaned eagerly forward in his chair, was it not his entire personality which gave her a feeling of fear and dread? She parted the curtain to watch him more closely, but saw instead a woman, with all the beauty artistic skill could devise, whose past was quite as improbable as her future was impossible, slowly passing the house. Between her and the man on the porch there quickly flashed a look of mutual understanding and amusement. Pale and shivering, the woman at the window sank slowly to the floor, feeling in her heart that emptiness which comes to all human souls when love is dead, and looking at last—yes, old.

A ROMANCE OF THE JUVENILE COURT.

EMILY'S father had died when she was a baby, and her mother had lived until she was eight years old, two years after they had given up their little cottage in the town for the big white house at the County Farm. The memory of her mother was rather vague and distant, as if through a shadow she saw her hovering around the kitchen fire, drawing her faded blue-and-white shawl closer around her quivering, hollow shoulders after a terrible paroxysm of coughing. Sometimes she remembered her mother would go into the large, bleak, dining-room, put her head down on one of the hard deal tables, and sob for hours. The superintendent's wife said that her

ma took on so because she was a pauper, but Emily did not think this was the reason. She thought it must be because the coughing hurt her so, and the blood came on her handkerchief.

Then came a day which Emily never quite forgot. She had been standing at the sink helping old Aunty Doane peel the turnips for a boiled dinner when the superintendent's wife came out to her and said, wiping her eyes with a kitchen apron, "Well, Emily, your poor ma 's gone at last, and better off she 'll be there than here." Of the days which followed her mother's death Emily had no remembrance, except that she had been very lonesome and wished some one would kiss her when she went to bed. Her mother had always done so.

When she was nine years old the second important change in her life occurred. Mrs. Chester, who occasionally drove out to the County Farm with papers for the old ladies and tobacco for the men, asked her to go home with her and be her own little girl.

Why she wanted her Emily did not understand. She did not know of the wistful little droop of her mouth, or the pathetic petition of her eyes for love. Neither did she know that, packed away in one of Mrs. Chester's trunks, were tiny white dresses with pink bows and baby pins, with "Mary" engraved on them. Long afterwards she learned that the truly strong souls lock their sorrows away in some secret place, and then lose the key so that they may never be tempted to bring them out to light.

The years at Mrs. Chester's were happy ones. Every one was very kind to her. Bob, Mrs. Chester's big step-son, used to take her to school, and in the evening help her with her lessons. No one could have been kinder to her than Bob, she used to think. There was nothing he would not do for her, and even Mrs. Chester had learned to make all her requests of Bob through Emily, for then she knew they would be granted. It was Emily who got Bob

to stay away from the "White Elephant," the only saloon in the town, and it was for Emily's sake he ceased his frequent visits to the near-by city where there were more saloons.

And so when Emily was twenty, and Bob teased her to marry him, and Mrs. Chester's eyes were filled with the entreaties she had not the courage to voice, Emily consented to do so. She was just like thousands of girls who, tender, ardent, and susceptible, are in love with love, and think because they have inspired a great affection they must reciprocate. The first few months of their married life were even happier than Bob had promised they would be. There was only one thing she would have had different, and of that she was really ashamed. Bob's eyes were black, and she loved gray eyes. Her mother's eyes had been gray, almost blue, but with the chill taken off, and she remembered a boy who had dropped out of her class the last year in school whose gray eyes had

little lights and gleams in them which made her heart beat quickly whenever they looked into her own brown eyes. She was sorry he did not graduate in her class, but his father had died suddenly, and he had to help his mother run their farm.

It was only a year after Emily married that Mrs. Chester, with a smile of perfect sweetness and joy, fell into that long sleep which has no awakening in this world. With the little she had left them, Bob and Emily moved to the city, where Bob could go into business for himself. In a few months the first baby came, and as it grew and thrived the business dwindled and sank. Two or three times they moved, and began over again; but success, which is ever so elusive and tantalizing, failed to come within reach of their grasp.

Bob began to be moody and talk pessimistically about the world being against them. When his eyes were newly red and bloodshot

he would talk with vociferous incoherence about good times coming and the things he would do by and by, but like all bacchanalian promises they never reached fulfillment. The result of his exchanging his overcoat for internal warmth instead of external was pneumonia, and when that dread disease takes hold with relentless grip there is only one ending.

At the close of the first week of Emily's widowhood the second baby came, and then began the most terrible six months of her life. The money left her was gone, the business was gone, her strength was gone, and after a few more pieces of furniture were gone she supposed she and the children would go too. She had read that, after the first pangs, starvation was not such a painful death. Once only in all those long, awful months did she wish to live. It was when, about dusk, she was hurrying along a crowded street with the dollars which represented a little enameled watch Mrs. Chester had given her, clasped tightly in her feverish

hand, that she saw, standing on a corner, a tall figure whose gray eyes had always been dearer to her than even her own heart would admit. Her first impulse was to run to him and pour out all her sorrows; but with the thought that she was nothing to him, came pride and the sound of Bob's last words, "Be game, Emily, my girl. Be game!"

The day the last piece of furniture was sold she locked the door and drew down the shades. What was the use of being game with Death? Did he not always conquer? The neighbors, ignorant yet kind-hearted, had tried with the feebleness of poverty to help her. Then some one with a remembrance which was divinely opportune thought of the juvenile court which would not let children starve anyway. As if in a dream, Emily read the notice to appear on a certain morning in Judge M——'s court-room and explain her destitute condition. Apathetically she permitted the neighbors to care for her until then, listening with dry eyes and

benumbed heart to their talk about foundlings' homes and other institutions where little ones were sent when their mothers could not care for them.

When the day of the summons from the court came she went with the babies to the big court building. She wondered if there was a sign over the entrance, "All ye who enter here, leave hope behind," but she felt as if she had lost her hope ages ago. Opening the door of the judge's room she awoke from her calm despair with a sudden start and moan. Standing just inside, with all the love in his eyes which had ever been in his heart had she but known it, was her old school friend. With no thought for any one else in the room he took her in his arms, shielding her piteous white face from the gaze of the curious as best he could. When the hot tears came to her eyes he did not try to check them; perhaps they would wash away some of the anguish and pain she had been enduring.

There was no need of explanations or wooing between those two, who understood each other's heart as their own. The sweetest and best love is always most expressive in silence. After the court adjourned Judge M—— performed the marriage ceremony. The babies had found a home and father, and to Emily had come God's best angel—LOVE.

REDEEMED

It was an ideal Easter Sunday; the sky was cloudless, the sunshine agreeably mellow, and, excepting now and then a passing feminine costume of resplendent hues, the morning seemed to palpitate with peaceful, soothing influences. Over on State Street a man with an old-young face was slowly coming out of a saloon where he had been washing down the warmed-over corn-beef hash served at the free-lunch counter with some stale beer. Standing in the doorway with his hands in his pockets, he looked quietly up and down the street. To the left was a low, degrading penny arcade and cheap noisy museum; to the right was a dance-hall whose lights had not long been extinguished. Across the street was a tenement

building, where lived—well, really he could not count the different nationalities which huddled together within its walls.

His surroundings were clearly a part of the devil's own playground; but as they did not offer any particular diversion to him at this time of the day, and the odors were increasing his headache, he decided to saunter over toward the lake for a breath of fresh air. He might be able to "touch" some loiterer on the benches for the price of another drink, or at least find an old fellow who would share his morning paper with him. He rather prided himself—as drowning men catch at a straw—in his ability to keep up an interest in the affairs of a world which had misused him, or, as he was wont to declare to convivial strangers over the bar, "had kicked him down almost into the gutter."

It was not until he was passing the Auditorium, and saw the announcement of preaching services by one of the city's famous clergymen, that he realized it was Easter, but along

with many other forgotten things was the significance of the day. To his annoyance all the seats on the lake front were occupied, no friendly eye met his, and papers were harder to find than food when one is hungry. An hour later, feeling discouraged and lonesome, he walked back on the same street. This time he found great crowds passing through the Auditorium doors, some almost fighting for entrance, begging seats or only standing-room, and others waiting breathless in their hope of admittance. Wonderingly the wayfarer leaned against a billboard; he had received a new sensation in watching people—men—so eager to go to church. A man who could preach in the largest hall in the city was certainly a master among men; how full of power must be his message to draw such a great crowd!

Pulling his hat on straight and arranging his collar, he started for the doors, led by an impulse of admiration, curiosity, or the desire to kill time, he did not know which. He was

glad the place was well illuminated—a dim cathedral light would have made him feel uncomfortable—and, taking a seat, he also felt relieved to see only a few lilies on the chancel rail; flowers in a church were too much like funerals. His eyes wandered over the faces around him, then upwards to the very highest tier of seats, where an old white-haired man sat, peacefully waiting for the service to begin. The man below stirred uneasily. How like, how very like the old man was to his own father, who probably now was sitting in a little church miles away, and his only son might have been with him if he had not chosen another path in life, if he had not followed what proved to be a mirage instead of an oasis.

The choir began to sing, and as the anthem reached him with its soft echoing insistence, the man sat very still, gazing ahead with wide fixed stare, but seeing and hearing nothing but the words of the refrain: "Why seek ye the living among the dead, O mistaken one; why

seek ye the living among the dead?" He dropped his head slightly, and began to think. Yes, he was the mistaken one; he had been searching for life, power, and even love, among the bones and skeletons of the dead, and what had been the result?

He had graduated from that Southern University with honors, which meant something in engineering circles, and he had settled in this city because, even if not as large as New York, it was a pretty good place in which to make a living. Immediately he had put his letter in a church, attended their weekly services, and joined the Young Men's Christian Association. At his boarding-place the people were kind and pleasant, concealing as best they could their surprise that a young man "so good-looking, so really clever," should be religious. The first winter was dull and lonely, the evenings were long, and a big city's demand for money was always in his ears and before his eyes. The cordial invitations of his landlady to join the

other boarders at cards in her parlor tempted him, and quickly he had learned the different games they played. Then some of the boys at the office began to ask him what he did Saturday nights. "Why not join their poker club? The stakes were not high, but they gave the lucky ones a little extra coin."

After awhile it was not only the last night, but all other nights of the week, which found him playing cards for money. Yes, he had said to himself, it was money that moved and commanded the world; he should have it and then power. The thought so thrilled him he insisted the stakes should be raised.

About this time there entered his life a woman with the eyes of a saint and the mouth of a pagan, whose complex emotions and nature, with their peculiar mingling of snow and fire, attracted, repelled, and finally held him prisoner. To win her he must have money, for her desires and ambitions were of such a height that his own were lost in trying to reach

them. There had been another woman, or rather girl, in his old home who was a sweet dreamer, a Heloise returned to earth, whose love was idealistic, but not magnetic and enthralling. As usual his fate was the same as that of other men who play cards for money and a woman. The opportunity to "borrow" from his firm was accepted, and when the discovery was made, only the influence of an old friend saved him from a long visit to another city.

After this occurred, the woman ceased to recognize him, good positions could not be found, his letters home ceased, and he was lost. He never stopped to think, but took a drink instead. He had been walking *among the dead,* where only sin, disaster, ruin, and sorrow existed, and he had been such a fool as to believe he would find *life* in that cemetery of wasted energies, lost hopes, stunned ambitions, and crushing forces. The words of the preacher interrupted his bitter memories:

"There are only two important factors in this world—*yourself and God.*" Was that really so? Could he believe it? Was it possible to redeem the past and begin anew? As the benediction was pronounced he bowed his head in humble acquiescence to the question in his heart. Yes, he would return to the old father, who trembled with longing and apprehension at the sound of his son's name; he would kiss again the mother whose heart was breaking under the cruelest of sorrows—disappointment in her dearest; and the other—yes, when he was more worthy of a great and faithful love, he would hold her in his arms; and after that there would be only left to him, *Heaven.* As he slowly walked out in the sunshine he knew that at last there had come to one human soul the glorious springtime and resurrection.

WHEN DREAMS ARE FALSE

It was a hot Sunday morning in July, and the occupants of a crowded apartment building were sleeping heavily after the night of restless tossing and futile search for a coveted breeze. In the hall bed-room on the third floor a weary little seamstress was dreaming, for on her pale face was the enraptured look of one who is seeing joyous visions—"And he held me close in his arms and kissed me just the way I have always wanted the right man to kiss me, and he said: 'Sweetheart, I would not have you younger or different. You are just yourself, and surely no other woman could be half as sweet.' " The rest of the beautiful things she knew her dear dream-lover was going to say were interrupted by the fretful crying of children in the

next room, and the rough, impatient commands of their parents. Slowly the drowsy woman opened her eyes, and then very quickly closed them as if the reality of her awakening had made a harsher discord to her dreams than she could well bear.

It seemed almost cruel to her that the one hour of the week she had for an extra rest and a delightful drifting away to the happy land of dreams should be so ruthlessly snatched away. She did not realize that her entire life was lived in that imaginative world where all hungry hearts create the beauty and love they so ardently crave. Circumstances had compelled her to make her living by sewing, and all human loves had passed her by, leaving her friendless and alone; but through all the dreariness of the years she had remained an idealist. When her needle flashed in and out of the pretty things she was making for another, or as she bravely faced each extreme of the weather, she would smile and say to herself: "This is only

for a short time. It won't—it can't last always. Sometime I shall surely belong to one who will love me and make me happy the way other women are happy."

On this morning she was glad to the heart because she could spend the day in the park, away from toil and environment which was sordid and rasping. After dressing carefully, she looked steadily in the glass. It was not vanity which held her glance there, but a quiet mingling of curiosity and courage. She wondered intensely what others saw in her face, and she feared to know because of the pain it might bring her. Her wistful eyes and sensitive mouth piteously spoke to their reflection in the mirror: "O, don't grow old just yet! Stay young and merry a little while longer. Please—please do. So many things may happen soon—yes, perhaps to-day—and then how glad you will be. Don't even look 'almost young'—why, that is pitiful too. Keep fresh and pretty, for you have not had your rights

yet—no, nor any of those sweet, blessed privileges of youth. O, wait just a little longer before you make me old." Sighing, she turned away. If only the dear, anticipated change would come soon; if only—but must she always keep on saying, "If only?" Forty years was such a long time to wait for happiness; but she might have felt comforted, for hope and expectation had hidden fully ten years of her age. Is it not right that the years of life should bow before the sweet, undaunted spirit who will not be crushed?

Out in the park she ate all the little dry lunch prepared for her, read the morning paper, and then sauntered over to the great flowerbeds surrounding the conservatory. What a glowing mass of color they made! Crimson dahlias, holding up regal heads; waving mignonette, whispering sweet perfume; the tender little faces of pansies,—how she wished they would talk and tell her their pretty secrets! As if her thought had been read, some one be-

side her said quietly, "Flowers are our silent friends." The voice was pleasant and gentle. Eagerly she turned and looked into the smiling eyes of a tall, gray-haired man, whom she suddenly felt that she had known always. "He has seen life," she said to herself; "but he has conquered, for his face has remained kind and good. Surely it would not be wrong to talk to him a little while." Somehow their chat lengthened until the approaching shadows warned her it was time to go, and then he asked so courteously if he could not ride home with her that she felt it would be silly and rude to refuse. At the door he gave her his card, saying he was employed at a well-known wholesale house, and she gave him permission to call.

After that day the whole world changed for the little seamstress. First she took a little of her savings and bought a rocking-chair, a pretty plant and gay cushion for the parlor of her landlady, who, although only the coarse, noisy wife of a big, red-haired policeman, had

often craved a "love affair" for her boarder. Then she staid home two days, with never a pang for the money she was relinquishing, and made a pretty new gown. It would not do to welcome her first caller in a dress which was shabby and old-fashioned, or else—the fear brought a chill to her heart—he might not come again. However, there was no need for worry, because he soon made it very evident he enjoyed coming to see her, and on his fourth visit he asked her to marry him. Confident in the love and rapture which filled her heart she had answered softly, "I have been waiting for you all my life."

The summer days passed quickly by, and there was little time for dreaming; but what of that, when all her roseate fancies were becoming blissful realities? At five o'clock in the morning she was up and taking her physical culture exercises, besides doing many other little things which only women understand; to make herself dainty and charming. The even-

ings he did not come she read and studied, hoping to make herself worthy of him mentally. "After we are married," he had said to her, "you shall devote all your time to the arts. Though I found you in a bed of roses, my rose of the world, I shall transplant you to a home across the sea where all the beauties of the heavens and the joys of the earth may be yours. 'Our lives shall flow on like a dream—in one eternal kiss.'" For a moment she had felt awed and stifled. Why did he always talk like the lovers in books instead of simply as a man in love would? It was about this time that the landlady began to wish things for the little seamstress. What kind of a sweetheart was he, never to take her anywhere or bring her a little present? "Talking ain't the only way to make love," she had once suggested to the couple; but her hint had not been noticed.

The first of August the lover borrowed ten dollars of his "cherished one," but his explanation that the canceling of a debt of honor had

left him low in funds fully satisfied the loving little woman, and when a few days later he told her that the next night he was going to bring her the beautiful engagement ring which was to be "the outward pledge of a mutual love," she was only too proudly happy to help him get the right size by loaning him the large blue diamond, with its old-fashioned setting, which had once been her grandfather's. It was hard to tell, when the important evening arrived, which of the two women in the tiny flat were the most excited. The little seamstress had spent two hours in dressing, and it still lacked an hour before he would come. The landlady alternately yelled to the children to behave, and ran to the window to see if "he" was in sight. Trying to be calm, the radiant little woman took up the evening paper, but the words were only a jumble, until suddenly she saw his pictured face, which, for a newspaper cut, was a vivid likeness. Very much startled she began to read—but why relate the

details of his shameful story? Her lover (he had spent most of his life in a penitentiary) had been arrested because, in making love to many women, he had induced them, with his suave manner and pleasant ways, to part with their jewelry and various sums of money. Before she could realize all the bitter truth, merciful unconsciousness came to her. In the morning she found this letter tucked under the door: "Farewell, my jewel of great price. Our union was not to be because a higher power hath intervened." At the bottom of the page was hastily written, "I liked you better than any of the others."

Trembling, the little seamstress unlocked a small drawer in the dresser and laid her only love-letter away. There was no need to look in the mirror now. Youth had kept faith with her, but how cruel had been its reward! Her romance had come and gone, and down through the long, lonely way before her she would hear the soft echo of her sad heart—"If only."

FATE

THE day he was born was the proudest, happiest day of their whole lives. It almost seemed too good to be true that the child they had prayed for and wanted so much had really come, that the queer little breathing bundle of flannel lying on the bed was their son—the living embodiment of a perfect love. Already they had been given strength, beauty, and great wealth; and now, with the wondrous gift of a little human soul to care for, their joy was complete. As the father gazed with dim eyes and full heart into the tiny face lying like a crumpled rose on the beautiful young mother's arm, he wished, if the tender thoughts floating through his mind could be considered actual desires, that his little son

would inherit all the sweetness and truth of the gentle mother's nature. The mother reached up one soft white hand and patted the father's cheek and then the little rosy one beside her. "He must be just like you, dear," she said, looking with adoring eyes at the two she loved best in all the world, "a strong, brave, honest man."

When the child was three years old he looked like one of Raphael's cherubs. The round, innocent face, the eyes so blue and appealing, the wee sunshiny curls, tempted every one to exclamations of delight, while his sweet baby prattle won their hearts. About the time he was six years old, the happy, loving parents received the first shock. Their lovely little darling could not get on with his nurse. He was so naughty and willful, she had declared, that she could not manage him any longer. It was decided that a firm young man, a college graduate, an old friend of the father's, should come and be the child's tutor. Surely, thought the surprised parents, under

"He was Naughty and Willful."

such careful guidance and skillful discipline their little one could be led out of his trying ways. For four years the young man did his best for the child. Many times, worn out and discouraged, he had wanted to leave the beautiful home which was having its first trial; but the parents' pleadings and the boy's own promises to be good and not give any more trouble would decide him to remain. Not once, but often, did he creep from his bed in the middle of the night to follow the straying footsteps of his little charge. When some of his favorite books were destroyed he said nothing, but when the carriage-house was set on fire "just for fun," the father said a good many things and the mother cried for hours.

On the child's tenth birthday the household knew that a radical change would have to be made in the boy's life. His parents and his tutor could not control him; some one else would have to try. After many anxious, prayerful days, the sad father took his son to a Boys'

Home School, where he hoped the contact with other boys, the regular living, the wise superintendent, and his magnetic wife would cause the child to turn over a new leaf. For a time everything went well; he seemed pleased with the change; he found many admirers among the other boys, and, for a wonder, rather enjoyed being good. After a few months, however, his old self returned, and many were the cares and worries of the superintendent in consequence. When on the point of sending him home, the parents would write such piteous letters of entreaty for one more trial, and the child would beg so sweetly for forgiveness, that they continued to keep him. Again and again the boy would run away from school "to see the world;" frequently boyish treasures of others, or household silver, would be found among his belongings, but little would be said about it.

When he was fourteen he robbed the village post-office. The father came quickly in great shame, and placed the wayward lad on a large

training-ship, where the vigorous life and hard duties might perhaps make a man of him.

After many attempts to escape, the boy finally succeeded, and nothing more was heard from him.

The mother, once beautiful and young, became a white-faced, broken-hearted woman. All hope of finding her lost boy was given up, and she died with his name on her lips.

The father still kept up a search; but his hair turned whiter every year, and his face more drawn and sorrowful.

About the time the boy would be twenty-one, the superintendent of the Boys' School was spending his summer vacation in one of the Eastern coast towns. Happening one day to pass a low sailors' saloon, he was startled by the angry cries and loud curses of the men within. Fearing something wrong might occur, he rushed into the place and saw a man bend over a card table and stab another. Some one leaped from behind the bar and laid

the dead man on the floor, while the murderer bowed his head on the table groaning aloud. As quickly as he had committed the awful deed, so quickly had remorse overtaken him. His anguish caused the teacher to lay a gentle hand on his shoulder. The yellow, curly head was slowly raised, and a pair of frightened blue eyes met the teacher's. Alas! he was the boy whose birth had once brought such joy and pride to the loving hearts of his parents.

The father died before the news of his son's last disgraceful act was brought to him.

A merciful Providence, under the shield of the death angel's wing, had spared him the shame and bitter agony.

BESIDE THE SEA

EVEN when a little child living with two self-contained, unemotional aunts in a colorless, dreary Vermont town, miles away from the whispering echoes and changing tints, stories of the sea had vividly fascinated her. Almost her first amusement in a home, where the theories and principles of living had completely choked love and its spontaneous expressions, was the privilege of sitting on a haircloth sofa looking at the pictures of the various bodies of water shown in the big atlas. It was a little difficult to retain her slippery seat, manage the awkward book, and memorize the names of all the important rivers, lakes, and oceans in the world, but when this was finally accomplished she was very proud. Indeed, not

even her new purple dress at Christmas or the huge apple she had made in wax for Aunt Lucinda's birthday had given her so much satisfaction. When she went to school and was able to do her share in keeping up the custom of "speaking pieces," her choice was invariably "The Wreck of the Hesperus" or something similarly suggestive of the tragedies on the sea.

It was not until they had opened an old chest in the attic in search of a prized recipe for dyeing curtains, and unpacked to the child's ardent delight a sailor's suit, an old compass, and some curious shells which once were the property of their uncle, that the aunts discovered there was anything unusual in her wonderful love for the sea. It seemed to them a morbid peculiarity, but they thought, as did all but one other in the village, that she would outgrow "this freakish way." The tender, sympathetic heart which came so near to understanding the child's was her Sunday-school teacher, who resolved that when she went "away out West"

to be the wife of the man she loved, a light-house keeper on Lake Michigan, that the little one should make her a long visit.

The coveted invitation from her teacher came when the child was eleven years old, and with it was sent the necessary means for transportation. The aunts thought they were very generous when they purchased two new plaid merinos for the trip, which were made suitably large for the next few years; even their thrifty New England minds could not imagine the self-denying economies which had provided the rail-road ticket.

That first day beside the lake the child never forgot. The world seemed to her a paradise. Behind her was an orchard, where the birds were having in their home, all shielded and perfumed with apple-blossoms, a high carnival. Their glad notes, in perfect harmony with the pink and white petals fluttering on the trees, seemed to vibrate to the happy beating of her heart. Stretching away out before her, as

if trying to reach the great, golden blossoms of the sun, was the lake. How strange and grand and beautiful it was! Her heart danced to the music of the waves. Every tender, changing hue of the water suggested some sweet fancy; suddenly with a new reverent love she felt close to God.

The lighting of the great lamp brought fresh excitement every evening, and when she was allowed to kindle it, sending its glowing rays of safety over the dark waters, she felt unspeakable joy.

The visit at her teacher's home lasted three months, and then she was called back to Vermont to bury one aunt and take care of the other until, after seven years of hopeless, dreary duty, she was left alone with five hundred dollars and only her Michigan friends to protect her. Returning again to their lighthouse home, she found two strangers, a merry little blue-eyed boy, who crowed and laughed even in the wildest and most relentless of storms,

and a tall, broad-shouldered man, the lighthouse keeper's brother, who cared for the water even as she did. His courage when the lake was in a harsh mood won her admiration, and gradually, as their happiness in being together deepened, they learned that the true meaning of life was Love.

The lighthouse only provided a living for one family, so the young lover became pilot for a large lumber-boat, determined that it would not be long before he could give his sweetheart a real home of her own. The Master Pilot, however, had other plans for her, and on a dark night there was one of those cruel storms on the lake which become history, and which can not be stilled by any human hand or voice. To look on the dead face of her beloved, to get the last touch of him into her very being that she might feel it there when her eyes would yearn for him and could not see him, and her heart ache for him and not be comforted, was denied her; for

the water, baffling and mysterious, never gave up his body.

The following year her friends at the lighthouse moved to Chicago; but the thought of living in a crowded, noisy city, separated from the calm, soothing heart of Nature, seemed to her unbearable, and so, with the supreme effort of a soul almost desperate, she wrote to the authorities at Washington beseeching the position of lighthouse keeper at South Chicago. It was an unusual plea, for a woman had never held such a position before, and the post was a lonely, isolated one, while the accommodations were so meager that the keeper was obliged to board on the beach over a mile from the light.

In time her request was granted, and for several years, until better arrangements were made, she walked many times daily over the long, broken pier, attending to her duties. The work to any other woman would have seemed hard, but to her it was *life*. In the silent hours

The Lighthouse.

of the night, when watching the twinkling, approaching lights of boats far out on the water, she wondered what dread disasters the golden beams of her light were saving them from. When the wind came up with furious impetuosity, and all Nature raged, she was thrilled to exaltation; or again, when there was a soft hush over the water, when even the birds were quiet and the clouds seemed to breathe a benediction, then she felt so near to her lover that their souls seemed as one.

The years passed by, and she continued to make her home on what she knew was "God's own domain." When old age came to her she would have a comfortable sum in the bank, for she had been most careful of her money, and she would go to Waukegan to live with the big, manly son of her former teacher. The news of his death at El Caney came to her just before the failure of the bank which held her savings. Through the belated kindness of the directors of the bank she has been enabled to

enter the Old Ladies' Home. After she had told me the story of her life, and shown the pictures of the sweetheart who had been taken from her, and the brave soldier boy who she had hoped would take care of her to the end, she leaned her white head on my arm, and said in a soft, trembling voice, "But I can still say, 'Thy will be done.' "

FROM A HOSPITAL WARD

THERE was not the slightest doubt that something unusual was about to occur in the red brick house adjoining one of the largest hospitals in the city. All day happy nurses in their striped gowns and white caps, with their arms full of bundles, had been running across the stone yard which separated the two buildings. Even staid and peaceful nuns, in long, flowing, black garments, walked back and forth faster than their custom, and smiled quite merrily at each other. When the caterer's and florist's wagons drove up to the "Nurses' Home" the joyous excitement within reached its height. Later, when night's darkness had fallen and two carriages arrived, leaving from one a gentleman in clerical suit, a soft hush

was felt in the air, which seemed to deepen and grow sweeter until suddenly there burst from the house a crowd of laughing young nurses and doctors, who hastened to the other carriage, almost completely filling it with flowers. Into this lovely bower there soon entered a young couple whose faces were fairly illuminated with happiness and love. Several times they tried to say something to the merry, excited ones surrounding them, but they found they could only look into each other's eyes and smile, which was all their friends wanted them to do. When at last the carriage door was shut, a shout went up from a rear porch of the great hospital, "Three cheers for our bride and groom!" It was the farewell of the cooks, maids, and elevator boys of the building, who were glad thus to show their appreciation of the sweet and tender romance which had bloomed within those walls of pain and suffering. But every love-story has a beginning.

Once there had been four members in a

modest, devoted little family out on the south side of the city; but the only son had been "among those killed" in a small railroad accident, and the father, after a long, expensive illness, had passed away, leaving his one little daughter to comfort the crushed and grieving mother. If only their home had been entirely paid for; if only "father" had been persuaded to carry a life insurance; if only—but how many bereaved hearts have sighed those words so helplessly and sorrowfully!—the future might not have stared back at them pitiless and empty. School-days, with all their little pleasures and stimulating competitions, were over for the daughter at the end of her second year in high school. All hope of ever being a schoolteacher, with a "magnificent salary to support mother," was dropped into that grave, deep yet never full, where many thousands have been obliged to leave their sweetest desires, highest ambitions, and ardent hopes.

When one pair of young hands could make

seven, perhaps ten, dollars every week, there was only one right thing to do, and that was, to let them work. As an attendant in a busy dentist's office the seventeen-year-old girl began her struggles with the world. It was harder than even mother, with tender eyes and loving sympathy, imagined it could be at first, and not the least of her trials was the necessity of conquering the faintness and repulsion which swept over her at the sight of patients in the doctor's chair.

The most cruel blows dealt us generally come at once. We go completely down suddenly and surely, and then can go no farther. Happy the strong soul who does not remain with face hidden in the abyss of misery to which it has fallen, but can arise and say with lifted eyes, "The worst has happened and—is over."

One evening the young girl returned to find her mother in that everlasting sleep which leaves no farewells. A few weeks after this

she noticed a strange lump on her foot, which rapidly began to swell and grow painful. When she had consulted two physicians she accepted the fact that she would have to live her life on crutches—*on crutches!* It was not enough to serve eight long hours at her work down-town, but to meet new obligations she was compelled to give up her evenings by attending a group of physicians' rooms in her own neighborhood. Many, many nights, exhausted with pain and weariness, she could only sleep in short, fitful intervals.

She was in her twenty-second year when she attracted the attention and admiration of a trained nurse who had come to the dentist's office. Her patience and cheerfulness under such pitiful conditions, her loyalty to her work, her eyes with their appealing glance, moved the nurse to more than a vague passing desire to help her. Thus it is only when our kindly impulses become something else beside whims and caprices that we are able to affect the lives

of others. Through the nurse's influence the big and famous Dr. M—— was induced to try his skill—gratuitously given—on the crippled girl. It took two months to determine the success of his operation, and during that time the entire hospital force and many of the patients, aroused from their monotony and pain, became interested in the young woman. Her little acts of thoughtfulness and messages to other suffering ones, her stories and laughter during her convalescent period, her sweet, unselfish heart which had learned to breathe for others, won every one who met her.

At the beginning of the third month, when it was no longer necessary for her to remain at the hospital, the nurses decided that, whatever excuse had to be given, she must stay over at their own Home a few weeks longer. This was just exactly what a young doctor, who had become, through his own ability and faithfulness, the head assistant to the great surgeon, wished to happen. He wanted to be

near her several times every day, so that he could tell her over and over again certain things which had occurred to him when she was his patient. However, even this arrangement was not satisfactory; there were so many continually surrounding his sweetheart, and the interruptions to his love-making were so frequent and disturbing. Only as his wife, in their own little home, could she be altogether his—but this is the end of the story.

LOVE ETERNAL

It was a pale, frightened gleam of winter sunshine which had crept into Kirby's room that early morning, but the man who lay in bed watching its shy approach wanted to throw out his arms in welcome and thanksgiving. So stimulating and necessary had the sun's evasive warmth become to him that he felt, after a week of cruel sleet and dangerous wind had kept him a prisoner in a small rented room, that perhaps he might be able to go down to his office. Weak and fumbling he began to pull on his clothes, wishing there was more heat in the room, and determined that his strength should stand the ordeal of dressing. Before he could fasten his collar a relentless paroxysm of coughing shook him

all over, and he sank into the nearest chair crying hoarsely, "It 's no use."

Later the postman's ring aroused him, but when the maid failed to slip a letter under his door he resumed his bitter reverie.

"No, she has not written, and probably will not until I have forced myself to dash off some more lies to her—'business picking up'—'new clients coming in'—'banquet last night'—'cough almost vanished.' Talk about imagination; but she is piqued any way that I have not praised her for all those stunts she did last week."

Reaching toward his table he gathered together a bundle of New York newspapers, and glanced over their head-lines. "Beatrice Moore makes trial trip on torpedo boat!" "Beatrice Moore vividly describes new subway!" "Richest man in the United States gives Beatrice Moore an interview!" With a strained smile he laid aside the papers, and took from an inner pocket a photograph. What he saw in the pic-

tured face changed his expression to tenderest love and ardent yearning. "Ah, you sweet, sweet woman, you have conquered the newspaper world of the big metropolis; you have made them all sit up and stare; you have worked hard, but you have kept up that dear little smile until you are the highest paid newspaper woman in this country, earning more in one week than the poor, helpless wretch you are engaged to can collect in a month. I am proud of you. Yes, my clever girl, I know you are a bewitching wonder, but I would rather have you here with me, belonging to me as my wife, than receiving all the homage and coin old New York editors can give you. It is selfish, but I need you so; and once applause did not satisfy you until you had my kisses."

The picture was put away, and the man sat quietly thinking of the time when he had first understood Beatrice. They were children skating on the little river which ran through their Iowa town when suddenly one of their

playmates fell through the ice. Before the others had thought what to do, Beatrice, with the assistance of her long fur scarf, had dragged the child out of the water. The frightened children on the bank began to clap; but, only flashing them a happy smile, she had run quickly to Kirby, and, throwing herself into his arms, cried, "You didn't clap, and it hurts." How characteristic that act was, he thought; how impulsive she was; but always dependent on his love, until the last few months when she had become so prominent in the journalistic world! He might as well give her up, he concluded, bowing his head on the table; that terrible cough, his enervated condition, had about driven away all hopes of being anybody in his profession.

How long he remained in that dejected position he did not know, for he had not heard the tapping on his door until it suddenly opened, and a merry voice, a sweet bubbling voice, a voice sent right from heaven, said

softly, "Ah, my boy, my poor, poor boy!" and then he felt Beatrice close beside him. After a few moments she began to talk. There were no words needed from him; the cheerless room; the untasted dinner of the night before; the shabby overcoat on the foot of the bed, and, plainer still, the flushed face and choking health of the man told his story. "You did not write or praise me, and I could not stand it there any longer—I simply had to come and see for myself," her glance swept around the room again, and she shuddered; "but I am not going back and leave you, dear lad—no, never—unless you do not want me any longer."

The next day they were married, and all that week Kirby sat in the Morris chair giving laughing directions about their packing, and looking over time-tables. What Beatrice said in her telegram to the "Big Man" he did not care to learn, for she was always near him now, sitting on the arm of his chair, rubbing her cheek against his, or chattering about the

future. At first she called their life out in the mountains a joke. Their home was only a pretense of a house; but what else did they need, when they lived out-doors most of the time? she asked. After two years their little girl was born, and then Beatrice laughed and talked less. To be sure Kirby was better; he would never be entirely well, but the future of the child troubled her, and the long silences and monotony in their lives gave her a wistful look. Once she had said, plaintively, "Boy, let us just pretend we hear footsteps on that path, to find out if we still have company manners." The business of getting his health back had so absorbed Kirby's attention that their financial condition had been ignored until the day he discovered Beatrice at her roughly built desk looking over figures; then he realized sharply that it cost something to live even on the side of a mountain. "We are up against it, lad; all the money is going out, and none is coming in; but perhaps

the 'Big Man' will let me do some specials for him," she said, simply.

For several weeks Beatrice's "Little Chats" in the Home Department of her old paper paid their living expenses, and a series on "How to Keep a Husband's Love" settled the doctor's bill; but after a while even "the very nicest articles" were rejected, and then the situation became desperate. "It was n't enough," said Kirby to himself on one of his long walks, "that she gave up the life she really loved, associating with the prominent men and women of the hour, achieving the success in her work that she craved, to marry a wreck like me; but now, out in this forsaken place, she has even to count the cost of a postage-stamp. It is going to be pretty hard for her to give up the magazines and Sunday editions. Poor girl, how her face always shines when she starts on her pony for the post-office!"

That their lonely poverty might eventually influence his wife to leave him and resume her

newspaper work did not occur to Kirby until he discovered how many hours she spent away from him in the woods back of the house, how sometimes at night he would hear her restlessly walking the floor. Many times he noticed she would drop her work and stand staring at the floor. When she seemed about to confide in him, a look of fear would come into her eyes and her lips shut determinedly. "O, I know how it will be," thought the anguished Kirby as he lay out in his hammock one long afternoon (Beatrice had gone again to the post-office). "She 'll get a strong, capable woman to come up here and take care of me; the little one can go to her sister's, and then she can go back to that paper. I 'll get sweet, breezy letters and generous checks from her until I drop off, and then—" but he never finished that thought, for there was a joyous shout down the mountain path, and quickly a disheveled, panting Beatrice, whose sparkling eyes warmed his benumbed heart, precip-

itated herself upon him. "O, lad! Dearest! dearest! My book is accepted—I 've been keeping it a secret from you—the publishers' say—you can read the letter—but anyway it is a pretty sure thing that my royalties will keep us all together for many a day." Kirby bowed his head on the little dark one leaning over him. She must not see his tears, for in this one beautiful moment of her life he would appear to her not weak but strong.

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